

CCDC61/VFL3 is a paralog of SAS6

and promotes ciliary functions

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Summary

Centrioles are cylindrical assemblies whose peripheral microtubule array displays a 9-fold rotational symmetry that is established by the scaffolding protein SAS6. Centriole symmetry can be broken by centriole-associated structures such as the striated fibres in *Chlamydomonas* that are important for ciliary function. The conserved protein CCDC61/VFL3 is involved in this process, but its exact role is unclear. Here, we show that CCDC61 is a paralog of SAS6. Crystal structures of CCDC61 demonstrate that it contains two homodimerization interfaces that are similar to those found in SAS6, but result in the formation of linear filaments rather than rings. Furthermore, we show that CCDC61 binds microtubules and that residues involved in CCDC61 microtubule binding are important for ciliary function in *Chlamydomonas*. Together, our findings indicate that CCDC61 and SAS6 functionally diverged from a common ancestor while retaining the ability to scaffold the assembly of basal body associated structures or centrioles, respectively.

1 Introduction

2
3 Centrosomes are amongst the largest protein assemblies found in animal cells. They
4 function primarily in the organization of the microtubule cytoskeleton and frequently
5 constitute the dominant cellular microtubule organising centre. Due to this function,
6 centrosomes play an important role in ensuring faithful cell division (Nigg and Raff, 2009).
7 Centrosomes are also involved in other critical cellular processes such as the formation of
8 functional immunological synapses (Stinchcombe and Griffiths, 2014), the organization of
9 actin (Farina et al., 2016) and intracellular signalling (Arquint et al., 2014).

10
11 Centrosomes consist of a pair of barrel-shaped centrioles that are surrounded by and
12 organize the pericentriolar material (PCM), a proteinaceous matrix that anchors microtubule
13 nucleating γ -tubulin complexes (Woodruff et al., 2014). Small electron-dense particles called
14 centriolar satellites, which play a role in centrosomal protein delivery and cellular stress
15 responses (Hori and Toda, 2016), are frequently found in the vicinity of centrioles. Besides
16 their function in the recruitment and organisation of the PCM, centrioles are also essential
17 for ciliogenesis. During this process, the older (mother) centriole docks to the cell membrane
18 and extends its peripheral microtubule array, which gives rise to a hair-like cell projection
19 that is referred to as a cilium. In multiciliated cells, cilia formation is initiated from multiple
20 centrioles that have been amplified around electron-dense cellular structures called
21 deuterosomes (Spassky and Meunier, 2017). Cilia have key roles in cellular functions such
22 as mechanosensing, signal transduction, fluid-flow generation and cell locomotion (Fliegeauf
23 et al., 2007).

24
25 Proteomics analyses identified over one-hundred different proteins associated with human
26 centrosomes (Andersen et al., 2003). Due to a lack of structural information, the exact roles
27 of most of these proteins for the organisation and function of the centrosome, as well as their

precise mechanism of action, are currently poorly understood. The highly conserved Coiled-Coil Domain Containing protein 61 (CCDC61, also known as variable flagellar number 3, VFL3) is one of these understudied proteins. Unlike wild-type strains, the *vfl3* strain of *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* does not assemble two cilia per cell, but displays between 0 to 6 cilia per cell and consequently shows an altered motility (described as the Vfl⁻ phenotype hereafter) (Wan and Goldstein, 2016; Wright et al., 1983). The *vfl3* mutant has defects in the structure of the basal body complex; it is missing the associated striated fibers and contains altered rootlet microtubules (Wright et al., 1983). Basal body / centriole duplication is also compromised (Marshall et al., 2001). Recent studies on CCDC61 in the unicellular ciliate *Paramecium tetraurelia* showed that the protein plays a crucial role in the orientation of basal bodies and localises at the interface between basal bodies and ciliary rootlets (Bengueddach et al., 2017). Consistent with these observations, CCDC61 was also shown to be important for the basal body orientation, and the generation of basal feet and ciliary rootlets in the multiciliated ventral epidermis of the flatworm *Schmidtea mediterranea* (Azimzadeh et al., 2012; Basquin et al., 2019) where its absence results in movement defects. Finally, in *Xenopus laevis*, the gene expression of *CCDC61* was found to be upregulated by the expression of Multicilin, which promotes centriole biogenesis in multiciliated cells (Stubbs et al., 2012). These studies point towards a potential role of CCDC61 in the organization of basal bodies in cells with multiple cilia. A recent report suggests that CCDC61 might also be involved in chromatin alignment and mitotic spindle assembly possibly by anchoring CEP170 (Bärenz et al., 2018; Pizon et al., 2020). However, how CCDC61 functions mechanistically is currently unknown.

Here, we identify CCDC61 as a highly-conserved paralog of SAS6, a key organizer of the central scaffold around which centrioles are formed (Leidel et al., 2005). Our crystal structures of CCDC61 demonstrate that it adopts a SAS6-like fold and forms oligomers through two homo-dimerization domains in a similar way to SAS6: an N-terminal globular

1 head and a parallel coiled-coil domain. However, instead of the spiral / ring assemblies
2 observed with SAS6, CCDC61 assembles into linear filaments with three-fold, left-handed
3 screw axes *in vitro*. Further analysis of CCDC61 reveals that its coiled-coil domains are
4 capable of directly interacting with microtubules. Residues important for microtubule binding
5 are critical for correct localisation of the CCDC61 ortholog VFL3 at basal bodies of
6 *Chlamydomonas* as well as for ciliary function in this organism. Based on these findings, we
7 propose that CCDC61/VLF3 plays a role in scaffolding the assembly of basal body
8 associated structures throughout eukaryotes.

Results

CCDC61 is a paralog of SAS6

The XRCC4 protein superfamily is constituted by the centriolar protein SAS6 and the DNA-repair proteins XRCC4, XLF and PAXX. Using a similar computational approach to that used previously to identify PAXX (Ochi et al., 2015), we identified the centrosomal protein CCDC61 (Andersen et al., 2003) as an additional candidate member of this superfamily (Figure 1A and Figure S1A). A phylogenetic analysis of CCDC61 orthologues using PSI-BLAST (Altschul et al., 1997) revealed that CCDC61 is a highly-conserved protein present in most Eukaryota that possess centrioles, except for flies and nematodes (Figure 1B and Table S1). Although not present in flies, CCDC61 orthologs are readily identified in other insects that include bees, beetles and lice (Table S1). Secondary-structure analyses of CCDC61 orthologs indicate that they all have an N-terminal domain followed by a discontinuous coiled-coil domain and a low-complexity region, which includes a putative α -helix ($\alpha 9$), predicted to be a coiled coil, at the C-terminus (Figure 1A and Figure S1B). The sequences of the N-terminal domain and $\alpha 9$ are particularly well conserved across species whereas those of the coiled-coil and low-complexity region are more variable (Figure S1B).

To gain more insight into the domain organization of CCDC61, we determined the crystal structure of the N-terminal domain of human CCDC61 (hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³) at a resolution of 2.6-Å using X-ray crystallography. The structure was solved by the single anomalous dispersion method using seleno-methionine-substituted crystals (Figure 1C and Table 1). As indicated by our bioinformatics analyses, we found that the protein fold of CCDC61 is remarkably similar to the canonical SAS6/XRCC4-like fold, which is characterized by the presence of a seven-stranded β -barrel with a helix-turn helix motif inserted between $\beta 4$ and 5 (Figure 1C and D). CCDC61 has an insertion of an extra α -helix ($\alpha 3$) followed by an unstructured loop

1 between $\beta 5$ and $\beta 6$ (Figure 1C and Figure S1B), which are unique to CCDC61. We conclude
2 that CCDC61 is a centrosomal protein that constitutes a hitherto unidentified paralog of the
3 XRCC4-superfamily members.

5 **CCDC61 forms higher-order assemblies**

7 The asymmetric unit of the hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ crystal contained three copies of protomers that
8 pack tightly against each other through interface regions whose residues are evolutionary
9 conserved (Figure S2A; D1 and D2). Remarkably, one observed CCDC61 homodimer (D1)
10 is highly similar to that formed by the SAS6 head domain (van Breugel et al., 2011; Kitagawa
11 et al., 2011) (Figure 2A). The conserved phenylalanine F128 of hCCDC61 (asterisks in
12 Figure 2A, close-up in the (i) panel of Figure 2A, dark blue arrow in the alignment in Figure
13 S1B) makes van der Waals interactions with M70 and V82 lining a hydrophobic pocket of the
14 homodimer partner that is constituted by $\alpha 2$, the β -hairpin of $\beta 5$ and 6, and the turns before
15 and after $\alpha 2$ ((i) panel in Figure 2A). The dimer interface is further stabilized by an extensive
16 network of salt bridges and hydrogen bonds including a β -zipper formed by residues found
17 between $\alpha 1$ and $\alpha 2$ (Figure 2A and S2B). In this network, the conserved aspartate D129 is
18 central to hydrophilic interactions between two protomers (panel (ii) in Figure 2A, light blue
19 arrow in the alignment in Figure S1B).

21 To test whether homodimer formation of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ observed *in crystallo* is also
22 observed in solution, we studied the oligomeric state of the protein using analytical
23 ultracentrifugation (AUC). This analysis indicates that hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ exists in a monomer-
24 dimer equilibrium with a K_D of $170 \pm 18 \mu M$ (Figure 2B, Figure S2C and D), suggesting a
25 relatively weak binding affinity, similar to what is observed with SAS6 (van Breugel et al.,
26 2011; Kitagawa et al., 2011). We next mutated the key residues F128 and D129 of the
27 SAS6-like homodimerization interface of CCDC61 (D1 dimer in Figure S2A) to glutamate

1 and alanine, respectively (hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³; F128E/D129A) and subjected the protein to AUC to test
2 whether these residues are important for CCDC61 dimerization. Indeed, dimer formation
3 was abolished in this mutant (Figure 2B and Figure S2C), suggesting that this dimerization
4 interface is dominant in solution, while the other hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ homodimer observed in the
5 asymmetric unit of the crystal (D2 in Figure S2A) appears not to be stable under the
6 experimental conditions.

7
8 Due to their overall structural similarity, we wondered whether the head domain of CCDC61
9 could interact with that of SAS6 in order to regulate its function. To address this question, we
10 used the recombinant head domains of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ and the ¹⁵N labelled head domain of
11 human SAS6¹⁻¹⁴³ and performed a chemical shift perturbation experiment by nuclear
12 magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy. Our results shown in Figure S2E did not reveal
13 an interaction between the two proteins. Thus, we conclude that the head domain of
14 CCDC61 forms a homodimer but does not heterodimerize with SAS6.

15
16 Besides homo-dimerization of its head domain, SAS6 contains a second dimerization
17 domain constituted by a parallel coiled-coil domain and, through these two interfaces, is able
18 to assemble into a 9-fold symmetric ring structure (van Breugel et al., 2011, 2014; Cottee et
19 al., 2015; Kitagawa et al., 2011) except for *C. elegans* (Hilbert et al., 2013), where its SAS6
20 homologue was found *in vitro* to form spiral assemblies instead. To find out whether
21 CCDC61 can form a ring in a similar manner to SAS6, we determined the crystal structure of
22 zebrafish CCDC61 (residues 1-170; zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰), which contains both its head and parts
23 of its coiled-coil domain, by X-ray crystallography at a resolution of 2.9 Å (Figure 2C, Table
24 1). In the crystal, zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ formed a homo-tetramer mediated by the head-to-head and
25 the coiled-coil dimer interactions in an arrangement that would not be compatible with the
26 assembly of a ring. A filament model of zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ suggests that CCDC61 would be able
27 to form proto-filaments with a left-handed three-fold rotational symmetry along the filament

axis, the helical rise of which is ~ 80 Å (Figure 2C and S3A). We also obtained a different crystal form of zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ with a hexagonal instead of an orthorhombic lattice. However, due to poor diffraction quality, we could not determine the structure of this crystal form.

To further confirm higher-order oligomer formation of zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ in solution, we subjected this construct, as well as its F129E/D130A mutant that disrupts the head-to-head interaction in zCCDC61, to size-exclusion chromatography with multi-angle light scattering (SEC-MALS) analysis. In this experiment, the His₆-lipoyl-domain tag of each construct was retained to stabilize the corresponding proteins at high concentrations. The results shown in Figure 2D demonstrate that the wild-type, but not the head-to-head dimerisation deficient mutant, was able to form higher-order oligomers beyond the coiled-coil mediated dimer. Together, these data suggest that CCDC61, like SAS6 (van Breugel et al., 2011, 2014; Kitagawa et al., 2011), is able to self-associate into ordered macromolecular assemblies.

Comparison of the structures of zCCDC61, SAS6 (*Leishmania major* (ImSAS6)) and *Caenorhabditis elegans* (ceSAS6)) and human XRCC4/XLF by superposition of their head domains showed that the difference between the exact higher-order assemblies formed by these proteins originates from a) altered relative orientation angles between their head domains and b) altered relative orientation angles between the head and coiled-coil domains (Figure S3A and B). When defining as z axis (z) the rotation axis required to bring the second head domains of zCCDC61 and ImSAS6 into superposition (top panel of Figure S3B), the corresponding rotation axis between the head domains of zCCDC61 and ceSAS6 also corresponds to z, whereas that between zCCDC61 and hXRCC4/XLF is about 10° off relative to z (top and lower left panels of Figure S3B). In comparison to the relative angle between the head and coiled-coil domain of ImSAS6, the corresponding angle of the other XRCC4 superfamily members is also altered: The coiled-coil domain orientation of zCCDC61 and hXRCC4 deviate in the opposite direction to those of ceSAS6 and hXLF

(lower right panel of Figure S3B). Previous observations of structures of SAS6 suggest that the relative orientation angle between the head and coiled-coil domains in particular determines the symmetry of the resulting filaments (Hilbert et al., 2013). Since both head-to-head and head-to-coiled coil orientation angles appear to be able to change independently from each other, a confirmation of this hypothesis will require further structural information on the superfamily members. Nevertheless, we conclude that two separate dimerization domains of the XRCC4 superfamily proteins allow them to form filaments with different symmetries and helical parameters through mutations of residues involved in the head-to-head and head-to-coiled coil interactions.

The coiled-coil domain of CCDC61 binds to microtubules

Next, we overexpressed GFP-hCCDC61 in human RPE-1 cells and performed a fluorescence-imaging experiment to better understand the behaviour of full-length CCDC61. The majority of the protein formed clusters and ~25% of GFP-hCCDC61 expressing cells showed filament-like structures in the cytoplasmic region (Figure 3A), although the extent and type of cluster formation by GFP-hCCDC61 varied widely among cells perhaps due to differences in expression levels. We hypothesized that the observed filament formation *in vivo* might be mediated by head-to-head dimer formation of CCDC61 as in our crystal structure (Figure 2A). However, when we disabled head-to-head dimer formation using the GFP-hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A} mutant, we still observed a similar variety of localisation patterns compared to the wild-type experiment (Figure 3A). Some of the hCCDC61 filaments formed *in vivo* upon overexpression were reminiscent of cytoplasmic microtubules. Immunofluorescence experiments against GFP-hCCDC61 and microtubules in RPE-1 cells indeed showed colocalisation between most, but not all, of the observed GFP-hCCDC61 filaments and microtubules (Figure 3B and Figure S4A). Similar observations were made when we overexpressed the GFP-hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A} mutant (Figure 3B and Figure S4A).

1 The relative proportion of GFP-hCCDC61 filament- or cluster-forming cells was largely
2 unchanged when the microtubule-destabilizing agent nocodazole or the microtubule-
3 stabilizing agent Taxol (Figure S4B) were added to cells, indicating that CCDC61 bound
4 microtubules might be protected against the action of microtubule poisons and that the
5 exchange rate between the different CCDC61 pools might be low. In agreement, live cell
6 imaging of RPE-1 cells showed that GFP-hCCDC61 filaments persisted in the presence of 5
7 μ M nocodazole over the course of three hours (Figure S4C).

8
9 We speculated that the coiled-coil and/or the C-terminal regions of hCCDC61 are
10 responsible for its microtubule association. To test this hypothesis, we overexpressed either
11 the coiled-coil domain (144-287) or the C-terminal region (288-512) of hCCDC61 as GFP-
12 tagged constructs in RPE-1 cells and carried out immunofluorescence experiments. The
13 coiled-coil domain construct was fused to a NES to avoid its mis-localization to the nucleus.
14 Our results indeed showed that both the coiled coil and C-terminal regions of CCDC61
15 colocalize with microtubules (Figure 3B and Figure S4A).

16
17 Since microtubule association in cells might indicate microtubule binding by CCDC61, we
18 sought to perform a direct binding assay to address this question. To this end, we purified
19 the hCCDC61 head domain as well as its coiled-coil and its C-terminal region as
20 recombinant proteins and performed microtubule co-pelleting assays using Taxol-stabilized
21 microtubules *in vitro*. In order to stabilize the coiled-coil domain of hCCDC61, we fused it to
22 the C-terminus of the DNA-repair protein PAXX (residues 1-137) whose head domain is
23 structurally similar to that of CCDC61 but does not dimerize (Ochi et al., 2015). Our results
24 suggest that both coiled-coil and C-terminal domain of CCDC61 are indeed able to directly
25 bind to microtubules *in vitro* (P (pellet) in Figure 3C) whereas the head domain is unable to
26 do so and remains in the supernatant fraction (S (supernatant) in Figure 3C).

1 Positively charged residues of microtubule-associated proteins frequently play a role in
2 microtubule binding (Cooper and Wordeman, 2009). Intriguingly, the coiled-coil domain of
3 hCCDC61 (residue 144-287; α 4-7) has an overall positive charge (theoretical pI \sim 10.5). To
4 identify residues involved in microtubule-binding by CCDC61, we mutated five conserved
5 positively charged residues in α 7 (K259, R263, R266, R268 and K270, red arrows in Figure
6 S1B) and repeated the microtubule co-pelleting assay. Mutation of these residues largely
7 abolished the microtubule-binding activity of hCCDC61 (Figure S4D) without affecting the
8 overall structure of CCDC61 or its general ability to form oligomers (Figure S4E-F), despite
9 some destabilization of the mutated coiled-coil domain on its own compared to the
10 corresponding wild-type construct *in vitro* (Figure S4F). The positively charged residues in
11 the coiled-coil domain of hCCDC61 might interact with the negatively charged residues of
12 the tubulin C-termini. To test this, we removed the C-terminal tails of tubulin from Taxol-
13 stabilized microtubules using the protease subtilisin (Serrano et al., 1984) (Figure S4G) and
14 repeated the microtubule co-pelleting assay. The result showed that the coiled-coil domain
15 of CCDC61 indeed mainly interacts with the tubulin C-termini (Figure S4H). Intriguingly,
16 upon overexpression of the 5E mutant of GFP-hCCDC61 in RPE-1 cells, we did not observe
17 CCDC61 filament formation (Figure S4I), while CCDC61 clusters were still observed. This
18 indicates that *in vivo* and in the full-length context, the α 4-7 part of CCDC61 comprises the
19 dominant microtubule binding activity in CCDC61 and that filament formation of CCDC61 is
20 largely mediated by its microtubule binding.

21
22 We also mixed the PAXX-stabilized α 4-7 coiled-coil domain of hCCDC61 with Taxol-
23 stabilized microtubules and subjected the mixture to electron-microscopic analysis using
24 negative staining. The micrograph shown in Figure 3D demonstrates that microtubules were
25 decorated with hCCDC61 while this decoration was not observed when we used the
26 equivalent construct carrying the 5E mutation (average widths of microtubules: 40.98 ± 2.55
27 nm (mean \pm standard deviation) and 33.97 ± 1.32 nm respectively (Figure 3E)). We note that

the average width of microtubules in the presence of the 5E mutant seems to be larger than the canonical diameter of microtubules (24 nm). However, this might be due to the negative staining of microtubules on carbon-coated EM grids as similar, wider microtubule widths also have been observed by others (Reid et al., 2017; Shibata et al., 2012). Together, these results suggest that CCDC61 primarily binds to microtubules by engaging the C-terminal tails of tubulin *via* conserved positively charged residues of $\alpha 7$ of CCDC61.

CCDC61 localises to basal bodies

In the ciliate protist *Paramecium tetraurelia*, previous studies have demonstrated that CCDC61 localises to basal body-associated substructures such as rootlets or striated fibres (Bengueddach et al., 2017). To find out whether hCCDC61 would also be found associated with basal bodies in multicellular organisms, we checked the distribution of CCDC61 in multiciliated epithelia cells of *Xenopus laevis* embryos expressing *Xenopus* CCDC61 (xCCDC61) fused to the N-terminus of RFP. Three-colour imaging of xCCDC61-RFP, Centrin2-BFP (marking the distal centriole region) and Clamp-GFP (marking the rootlet) in these multiciliated frog embryos demonstrated that, like its unicellular orthologs, xCCDC61 associates with the proximal part of basal bodies in a polarized manner that is close to, but distinct from rootlets (Figure 4A). We also performed immunofluorescent imaging of GFP-hCCDC61 overexpressed in RPE-1 cells under serum-starved conditions in which these cells form a single, non-motile primary cilium. This analysis showed that hCCDC61 can also localize to the periphery of human basal bodies (Figure 4B). To investigate the function of hCCDC61 in this cell line, we generated hCCDC61-deficient RPE-1 cells using CRISPR/Cas9 (Figure S5A). Although we did not observe obvious defects in proliferation, cell cycle progression and centrosome or centriole numbers (Figure S5B-D), we observed a delay in the formation of primary cilia both in these hCCDC61-deficient RPE-1 cells (Figure 4C) and also in RPE-1 cells depleted of hCCDC61 by RNA interference (Figure S5E). The

1 delay in cilia formation that is observed in hCCDC61 deficient cells could potentially impact
2 developmental processes. However, normal-looking cilia assemble eventually in RPE-1
3 cells, which suggests that hCCDC61 plays a role in ciliogenesis but is not essential for the
4 generation of primary cilia. Together, these results suggest that the localisation of CCDC61
5 to basal bodies is evolutionarily conserved.

6

7 **Characterisation of *Chlamydomonas* strains carrying mutations in the CCDC61** 8 **ortholog VFL3**

9

10 CCDC61 orthologs play an important role in the functioning of motile cilia in different model
11 organisms (Azimzadeh et al., 2012; Bengueddach et al., 2017; Wright et al., 1983). We
12 wondered whether the filament-forming / microtubule-binding activity of CCDC61 would be
13 functionally important in this respect. To answer this question, we used *Chlamydomonas* as
14 a model organism because strains containing defective *VFL3* (its *CCDC61* ortholog) are
15 available and the mutant phenotypes have been well characterised (Hoops et al., 1984;
16 Keller et al., 2010; Marshall et al., 2001; Wright et al., 1983). Furthermore, *VFL3* shares 36%
17 sequence identity with hCCDC61 and key residues involved in head-to-head interaction and
18 microtubule binding are conserved (blue and red arrows in Figure S1B). Through Sanger
19 sequencing, we identified a nonsense mutation (AAG to TAG) in the *VFL3* gene in the
20 original mutant, which we named *vfl3-1*. The nonsense mutation (K497X; green arrow in
21 Figure S1B) is found in exon 8. We also obtained an insertion mutant, LMJ.RY0402.091002,
22 which has an insertion of an exogenous DNA cassette that confers paromomycin resistance,
23 in intron 7 of *VFL3*, from the *Chlamydomonas* CLiP mutant library (Li et al., 2016). In 20
24 tetrads of this insertional mutant crossed to wild-type, we observed complete co-segregation
25 of the paromomycin resistance phenotype and the *Vfl* phenotype. Therefore, we considered
26 this insertion mutant a second allele of *vfl3* and renamed it *vfl3-2*.

In both mutant alleles, we quantitated the Vfl⁻ phenotype. We observed that in an asynchronous culture that 7% and 6% of *vfl3-1* and *-2* respectively had more than two flagella. This is a phenotype not seen in any wild-type strains. Moreover, the two mutants had an increased number of cells with no flagella (45 and 58% compared to wild-type with 10%) or one flagellum (26% and 15% vs 5% for wild-type) (Figure 5A). By immunofluorescence experiments (Figure S6A), the wild-type (CC-124) exhibited normal distal striated fibers (stained with antibodies to centrin, which is found in the distal striated fibers in *Chlamydomonas* (Dutcher and O'Toole, 2016)) and biciliated cells (stained by acetylated α -tubulin), whereas we noted abnormal striated fibers and abnormal cilia number in the *vfl3-2* mutant strain as reported previously in *vfl3-1* (Wright et al., 1983).

Analysis of the *VFL3* transcripts in *vfl3-1* revealed that this mutant contains a full-length transcript (Figure S6B). In *vfl3-2*, the *VFL3* mRNA is truncated and contains only exons 1-7, which are located upstream of the insertional cassette (Figure S6B). We found that transformation of the wild-type *VFL3* gene into *vfl3-1* restores normal ciliary numbers (Figure 5A and Table 2). In order to detect the VFL3 protein, a 3xHA epitope tag was introduced within either exon 7 (ex7-HA) or exon 9 (ex9-HA) of *VFL3* and both tagged *VFL3* transgenes were integrated into the *vfl3-2* strain where they gave rise to full-length *VFL3* transcripts (Figure S6B). However, the tagged genes only partially rescued the mutant phenotype (Figure 5A). The number of cells with zero flagella is not restored to wild-type levels ($p < 0.0001$) by a χ^2 test. (Figure 5A). The transgene did restore the striated fiber phenotype in *vfl3-2* (Figure S6A). Therefore, we confirmed that the phenotypes of the *vfl3* strains are due to the *VFL3* gene defects.

The basic amino acids involved in microtubule binding are important for VFL3 function and localization

Immunoblots of *Chlamydomonas* whole cell extracts from various transformants that carry either ex7-HA or ex9-HA tagged VFL3 with an anti-HA antibody reveal a single polypeptide with the expected size of ~85 kD (Figure S6C and D), which is absent in extracts of wild-type cells (CC-124) (Figure S6C). Immunofluorescence of NFAPs (nucleoflagellar apparatus) (Wright et al., 1985) in multiple, independent transformants shows that VFL3 (magenta, Figure 5B; green, Figure 5C) localizes to both the basal bodies (green Figure 5B; magenta, Figure 5C). To determine the precise location of VFL3 in the basal bodies, we co-stained VFL3 with UNI2, a protein that localizes to the distal end of the basal bodies (Figure 5B and Figure 5-movie supplement 1) (Piasecki and Silflow, 2009); and BLD10/CEP135, which localizes to the cartwheel of the basal bodies at their proximal end (Matsuura et al., 2004) (Figure 5C). Our results indicate that VFL3 does not overlap completely with either UNI2 or BLD10 and is likely distributed along the full-length of the basal bodies.

We next asked whether filament formation and microtubule binding of VFL3 are important for its function and localization. We first generated a strain containing the F126E and D127A mutation in VFL3 (VFL3-FD), which are equivalent to the F128E/D129A mutation in hCCDC61 that disrupt its head-to-head homodimerization. We transformed the *VFL3-FD* transgene (untagged or HA-tagged (Figure S6D)) into both *vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2* cells, and observed a partial rescue of the mutant phenotype in the *vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2* cells respectively (Figure 5A). The untagged *VFL3* transgene, and the untagged FD mutant transgene are significantly different from the mutant parent, while the untagged FD mutant is also significantly different from the strain with the wild-type transgene ($p < 0.0001$) based on the number of cells with zero flagella (Figure 5A) by a χ^2 test. The HA-tagged FD mutant was not significantly different from the HA-tagged wild-type transgene in the *vfl3-2* strain. The difference between tagged and untagged FD mutants might be due to the HA tag partially interfering with the protein function. About 2% of cells contain more than 2 cilia compared to less than 0.1% in wild-type cells. These data suggest that there is a partial rescue of the Vfl-

1 phenotype by the *VFL3-FD* transgene. The VFL3-FD-HA protein localizes to the basal body
2 region (Figure 5C), similar to what we observed in wild-type VFL3-HA. We also mutated the
3 five-basic amino-acids residues (K266, R270, K273, R275 and R277), whose equivalents in
4 hCCDC61 are involved in microtubule binding, to glutamates (VFL3-5E). Co-transformation
5 of the *VFL3-5E* transgene into the *vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2* strains with the *APHVIII* gene, which
6 confers resistance to the antibiotic paromomycin, failed to yield any strains with a rescued
7 phenotype in ~1400 drug-resistant transformants (Table 2). To investigate whether the
8 failure to rescue is caused by an absence of expression of the transgene or by the 5E
9 mutation, we co-transformed a HA-tagged version of *VFL3-5E* into *vfl3-2* and screened ~200
10 drug-resistant transformants by immunoblot and immunofluorescence (Figure 5C and Figure
11 S6D). We obtained a single transformant that showed expression of the HA-VFL3-5E protein
12 but the 5E mutant strain was not significantly different from the mutant *vfl3-2* parent ($p =$
13 0.68) based on the number of cells with zero flagella (Figure 5A) by a χ^2 test (Figure 5A). We
14 observed accumulation of HA-VFL3-5E around the basal body region with BLD10/CEP135
15 (Figure 5C). Thus, our results suggest that the microtubule-binding region of VFL3/CCDC61
16 plays a critical role in its function and accurate localization in living cells.

Discussion

Here we provide a detailed structural and biochemical characterization as well as a functional analysis of the centrosomal protein CCDC61. CCDC61 is a paralog of the centriolar protein SAS6, forms higher-order oligomers and is capable of binding microtubules *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Furthermore, we demonstrate that the CCDC61 ortholog in *Chlamydomonas*, VLF3, localises at basal bodies. Our functional studies in cells suggest that microtubule binding of VFL3/CCDC61 is important for its correct localization to basal bodies and its function *in vivo* whereas its head-to-head interaction appears not to be critical but plays a role in ensuring faithful formation of basal bodies *in vivo*. Collectively, our data suggest that the main function of CCDC61 might lie in the organization of basal body associated structures (Figure 6).

Our biochemical and structural data unambiguously demonstrate that CCDC61 belongs to the XRCC4 superfamily of proteins. Members of this superfamily have a centrosomal / centriolar function (SAS6 (Leidel et al., 2005) and CCDC61 (Andersen et al., 2003; Wright et al., 1983)) or play crucial roles in the NHEJ DNA-repair pathway (XRCC4 (Li et al., 1995), XLF (Ahnesorg et al., 2006; Buck et al., 2006) and PAXX (Craxton et al., 2015; Ochi et al., 2015; Xing et al., 2015)). Their protein architecture consists of a N-terminal head domain followed by a coiled coil and C-terminal low-complexity region. A structure-guided sequence alignment of the head domains of the human XRCC4 superfamily members showed that the sequence identities between them are below 20% (Figure S7A and B). However, they share a conserved sequence motif (red-dotted rectangle in Figure S7A), which has previously been named the PISA motif (Leidel et al., 2005). The motif is likely to be critical for the functions of the XRCC4 superfamily members because homozygous mutations in this motif in *XRCC4*, *XLF* or *SAS6* cause growth defects (Buck et al., 2006; Khan et al., 2014; Murray et al., 2015). Their similarity also extends to the ability of the superfamily members (except

for PAXX), to form proto-filaments using two dimerization interfaces provided by the head and the coiled-coil domains. Head-to-head dimerization in all these cases occurs with a low binding affinity, suggesting that these proteins need to be enriched locally and/or be stabilized by other molecules in order to efficiently form faithful higher-order assemblies. In agreement with this, the protein concentration of CCDC61 in HeLa cells appears to be very low (Bauer et al., 2016). SAS6 assembly, for instance, is probably aided by its interaction with CEP135 and STIL (Dzhindzhev et al., 2014; Lin et al., 2013; Ohta et al., 2014) whereas for the XRCC4/XLF complex this function is exerted by its associations with DNA ligase IV, Ku70/80 and DNA (Ochi et al., 2014). Putative CCDC61 binding proteins such as CEP170 (Bärenz et al., 2018; Pizon et al., 2020) might play an equivalent role in CCDC61. Thus, the overarching principles of higher-order oligomerization and stabilization by other proteins appears to be conserved among the XRCC4 superfamily members. It is worth mentioning that the head domain of hCCDC61 contains a conserved surface area that is not directly involved in D1 dimer formation as described in Figure 2A and Figure S2A. Instead, it contributes to the formation of the D2 dimer that we observed in the asymmetric unit of the hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ crystal, but not in solution (Figure 2B, Figure S2A and C). This surface might be involved in a protein-protein interaction between CCDC61 and another protein. Alternatively, it is possible that the D2 dimer exists *in vivo* under high local concentrations and that it might facilitate formation of CCDC61 filament bundles. Indeed, when we superposed two CCDC61 filaments onto the D2 structure, we found that these filaments do not clash strongly with each other (Figure S7C).

Our phylogenetic analysis demonstrates the presence of CCDC61 in most ciliated eukaryotes, except for flies and nematodes. Interestingly, the conservation pattern of CCDC61 (Table S1) is very similar to those of δ - and ϵ -tubulins (Hodges et al., 2010), which are important for centriolar doublet and triplet microtubule formation (Dutcher and Trabuco, 1998; Dutcher et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2017). However, our data argues against a central

1 role of CCDC61 in centriole / centrosome duplication in human cells (Figure S5B-D). These
2 results agree with findings in the flatworm *Schmidtea mediterranea* (Azimzadeh et al., 2012),
3 but contrast with reports from the unicellular *Chlamydomonas* (Marshall et al., 2001) and
4 *Paramecium* (Bengueddach et al., 2017). The difference between these studies possibly
5 stems from the fact that centrioles are duplicated as basal bodies in these organisms
6 whereas they are duplicated through the centrosomal or deuterosomal pathway in humans
7 and planaria. Thus, CCDC61 itself might not be part of the core centriole duplication
8 machinery in these unicellular organisms, but rather be important for the maintenance of the
9 basal body-associated architectures that are needed for the faithful recruitment of this
10 duplication machinery to probasal bodies.

11
12 Consistent with a role of CCDC61 in basal body function, we observed localisation of
13 CCDC61 at basal bodies of primary cilia of human RPE-1 cells, motile cilia in green algae
14 and motile cilia of multiciliated cells of frog embryos (Figure 4A, 4B, 5B and 5C). Our data,
15 as well as evidence from other systems in which CCDC61 has been studied, suggest that
16 the main function of CCDC61 is related to basal body function in cells with motile cilia. In the
17 motile ciliate *Paramecium*, CCDC61 localizes at the interface between basal bodies and
18 striated rootlets and is important for their organization (Bengueddach et al., 2017). These
19 basal body associated structures play a role in basal body positioning at the cell cortex and
20 in probasal body assembly (Hoops et al., 1984). A specific role of CCDC61 in the anchoring
21 of basal bodies in multiciliated cells is also suggested by experiments in the planarian
22 *Schmidtea mediterranea*. Planaria move by gliding on a ventral array of multiciliated cells
23 (Azimzadeh and Basquin, 2016). Knockdown of CCDC61 in *Schmidtea mediterranea* was
24 found to result in an abnormal direction of locomotion (Azimzadeh et al., 2012) due to basal
25 body mis-orientations caused by a failure to generate basal feet and ciliary rootlets correctly
26 (Basquin et al., 2019).

1 This notion is in agreement with previous studies on the *Chlamydomonas vfl3-1* strain that
2 suggest that VFL3 is crucial for the faithful organization of proximal and distal striated fibers
3 as well as rootlet microtubules (Hoops et al., 1984; Wright et al., 1983). We also confirmed
4 this using the insertional mutant strain (*vfl3-2*). Interestingly, the *vfl3-1* strain carries a
5 premature stop codon after K497, which would retain the head and coiled-coil domains of
6 VFL3 but not $\alpha 9$. Similarly, our transcript analysis suggests that the *vfl3-2* strain may carry a
7 truncated protein that retains the first 406 amino acids of VFL3, 22 amino acids downstream
8 of the $\alpha 8$ helix. Thus, this could be indicative of a crucial role of $\alpha 9$ in VFL3 function, given
9 the mutant phenotype in both strains. However, since we could not obtain reliable antibodies
10 that detect VFL3, we cannot exclude the possibility that the truncated VFL3 gene product is
11 destabilized in these strains explaining the observed phenotype.

12
13 Although our crystal structures of CCDC61 fragments *in vitro* suggest that CCDC61 forms
14 filaments (Figure 2C), we could not visualize these *in vivo*. However, a VFL3/CCDC61 allele
15 with a disabled head-to-head dimerization (VFL3-FD) was unable to completely rescue the
16 *Vfl*⁻ phenotype (Figure 5A) in *Chlamydomonas*, arguing for a functional role of this interface.
17 Furthermore, since both *vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2* strains retain intact exons 1-7 of VFL3 (residue
18 range 1-406), a heterodimer between the putative truncated VFL3 and the rescue construct
19 might form and be partially functional, potentially accounting for the weak phenotype
20 observed in the VFL3-FD strain. Intriguingly, in the filaments formed by CCDC61 *in vitro*, the
21 distance between the projecting coiled-coil domains of CCDC61 that point to the same
22 direction is about 24 nm, which corresponds to three times the 8 nm repeat of tubulin dimers
23 in microtubules (Figure 2C). This periodicity might facilitate microtubule interaction by the
24 CCDC61 coiled-coil domain.

25
26 Despite the weak phenotype observed in the VFL3-FD strain, we speculate that the ability of
27 CCDC61/VFL3 to form higher-order assemblies might aid scaffold formation of the protein

1 through which basal body associated substructures are anchored or helped to stay in place
2 under the mechanical stresses acting on motile cilia (Figure 6). CCDC61/VFL3 might interact
3 with a centrosomal and basal body specific protein that is yet to be identified, and scaffold
4 the protein with microtubules to construct regularly aligned basal body associated structures.
5 Two groups recently proposed that CCDC61 interacts with CEP170 and might play a role in
6 subdistal appendage function of centrioles (Bärenz et al., 2018; Pizon et al., 2020). While
7 our manuscript was under review, Pizon and colleagues also reported CCDC61 association
8 with microtubules (Pizon et al., 2020), in agreement with our data.

9
10 Our study also raises several questions, particularly, whether, *in vivo*, CCDC61 forms proto-
11 filaments as observed in *crystallo* and, if so, what their exact role is. How does microtubule
12 binding of CCDC61 assist in the assembly and organization of basal body associated
13 structures? Further research efforts are required to elucidate the exact function and the
14 molecular mechanisms of CCDC61 that underlie the biogenesis of these structures.

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Author Contributions

T.O. performed computational analysis with T.L.B., X-ray crystallography with D.D.B. and M.V.B., electron microscopy, biochemistry experiments with M.V.B., gene knockout and transient expression. V.Q. performed characterizations of knockout and knockdown human cells. H.L. performed *Chlamydomonas* experiments. J.J. performed *Xenopus* experiments. I.R.S. performed FACS experiments. F.B. performed light microscopy experiments of *Xenopus* embryos. D.D.B. determined one of the crystal structures together with T.O. C.M.J and S.H.M performed biophysics experiments. S.M.V.F. performed NMR experiments. A.N.B. and Y.K. performed light microscopy experiments of human cells. S.P.J. provided

1 recourses for the knockout experiments. T.O. and M.V.B. conceptualized the project. T.O.,
2 V.Q., H.L., S.K.D., F.G. and M.V.B. conceived experiments and wrote the original draft of the
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5

6 **Declaration of interest**

7 The authors declare no competing interests.

Figure legends

Figure 1. CCDC61 is an evolutionally conserved protein paralogous to SAS6. (A) Domain architectures of the XRCC4 superfamily members. Low complexity regions are drawn by lines. (B) A phylogenetic tree of CCDC61 orthologs. Accession numbers of the corresponding amino-acid sequences are provided in Table S1. Numbers are bootstrap values. (C) Crystal structure of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³. The structure is presented using a cartoon representation and a rainbow colour scheme from N-terminus (N; blue) to C-terminus (C; red). Missing loops are drawn with dotted lines. (D) Crystal structures of the XRCC4 superfamily members SAS6, XRCC4, XLF and PAXX (PDB codes: 2Y3W (van Breugel et al., 2011), 1IK9 (Sibanda et al., 2001), 2QM4 (Li et al., 2008) and 3WTD (Ochi et al., 2015) respectively). See also Figures S1, S7 and Table S1.

Figure 2. CCDC61 forms linear filaments *via* homodimerization mediated by the head and coiled-coil domains. (A) Crystal structure of the head-to-head homodimer of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³. Missing loops are drawn with dotted lines. Key residues of the interaction interface are indicated by (i) and (ii), of which magnified views are shown in the rectangular boxes on the right. Asterisk indicates the locations of the F128 residues. Dotted lines in panel (ii) indicate hydrogen bonds. Head-to-head dimers of SAS6 and XRCC4/XLF (PDB codes: 2Y3V (van Breugel et al., 2011) and 3W03 (Wu et al., 2011)) are shown at the bottom. (B) AUC results showing that hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ forms homodimers in solution. (C) Crystal structure of the zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ tetramer. On the right, straight arrows indicate the N-to-C direction of the coiled-coil domains. The angle between the arrows is 120°. (D) CCDC61 forms higher-order oligomers in solution. SEC-MALS chromatograms of His₆-lipoyl-zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ (red) and His₆-lipoyl- zCCDC61^{1-170; F129E/D130A} (blue) using a Superdex S200 column at room temperature. Protein concentrations (before injection onto the column) were 1, 6.5 and 65 mg/ml (lightest to darkest red respectively) and 1, 6.8 and 73 mg/ml (lightest to darkest blue respectively).

The minimum and maximum refractive index values of each chromatography profile were normalised to 0 and 1 respectively. See also Figures S2 and S3.

Figure 3. CCDC61 binds microtubules. (A) Fluorescent images of RPE-1 cells, transiently over-expressing GFP-hCCDC61 or hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A}, showing the different CCDC61 localisation patterns observed under these conditions. Bar graphs show the percentage of GFP-positive cells containing clusters-only “C” versus filament-containing cells “F” ($n=279$ for GFP-hCCDC61 and $n=468$ for GFP-hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A} counted from three biological replicates). Error bars are standard deviations. Positions of blow-up images labelled with 1 (filament-containing cell) and 2 (cluster-only cell) are indicated with white-dotted squares in the top panels. Scale bars are 20 μm . (B) Transiently over-expressed hCCDC61 colocalizes with microtubules in cells. Immunofluorescent images of RPE-1 cells transiently over-expressing GFP-hCCDC61, GFP-hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A}, GFP-hCCDC61^{144-287-NES} and GFP-hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹². Anti-GFP staining is shown in green, microtubule staining in red. Magnified views of the regions indicated by the white-dotted squares in the merged images are shown either below (GFP-hCCDC61 and GFP-hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A}) or as insets (GFP-hCCDC61^{144-287-NES} and GFP-hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹²). Displayed are representative images acquired from a total of 14, 8, 10 and 11 different RPE-1 cells for GFP-hCCDC61, GFP-hCCDC61^{F128E/D129A}, GFP-hCCDC61^{144-287-NES} and GFP-hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹², respectively. Scale bars are 10 μm . (C) Coiled-coil and C-terminal regions of hCCDC61 bind microtubules *in vitro*. Coomassie stained SDS-PAGE gel showing a co-pelleting assay of Taxol-stabilised microtubules with the head domain (1-143), PAXX-fused coiled-coil domain (144-287) or the C-terminal region (288-512) of hCCDC61. S and P indicate supernatant and pellet fraction, respectively. (D) The coiled-coil domain of hCCDC61 directly binds microtubules. Negative-stain EM micrographs of microtubules that show their decoration with a layer of PAXX-hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷ that is not observed with the corresponding 5E mutant of CCDC61. Scale bars are 200 and 50 nm in the overview panels (left) and the magnified panels (right), respectively. (E)

Quantification of the widths of microtubules decorated by PAXX-hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷ or in the presence of PAXX-hCCDC61^{144-287; 5E} from (D). Widths of five different positions of ten microtubules were measured for each construct. Each point (blue for PAXX-hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷ and green for PAXX-hCCDC61^{144-287; 5E}) represents a measured width at each position. Error bars (standard deviations from the mean) are shown in black lines with flat arrow ends. See also Figure S4.

Figure 4. CCDC61 associates with basal bodies and plays a role in ciliogenesis. (A) xCCDC61 associates with basal bodies and rootlets in multi-ciliated epidermal cells of *Xenopus* embryos. A fluorescent image of a *Xenopus* embryo expressing xCCDC61-RFP (red), the basal body component Centrin2-BFP (blue) and the rootlet component Clamp-GFP (green). Scale bar is 3 μ m. (B) Location of hCCDC61 at the periphery of basal bodies of primary cilia. Immunofluorescent image of an RPE-1 cell transiently over-expressing GFP-hCCDC61. Co-immunofluorescent staining was performed against GFP (green), basal bodies (γ -tubulin, red) and the ciliary axoneme (ARL13B, magenta). Scale bar is 1 μ m. (C) Ciliated cells of control and CCDC61-knockout RPE-1 cells. Immunofluorescent images show representative immunofluorescent images used for quantifications of ciliogenesis of primary cilia. Scale bar is 10 μ m. The bar graph shows that ciliogenesis was delayed in the CCDC61 knockout cells. Data shown correspond to three biological replicates (total cell counts $n=1181$, 1103 and 1008 for control, clone 1 and clone 2 cells after 24-hour serum starvation respectively, and $n=1151$, 1046 and 1242 for control, clone 1 and clone 2 after 48-hour serum starvation respectively). Percentages are relative to control cells. Bar graphs show mean \pm standard deviation. See also Figure S5.

Figure 5. *Chlamydomonas* VFL3 protein localizes to basal bodies and the proximal ends of flagella. (A) Rescue of abnormal flagella numbers in *vlf3* strains by wild-type VFL3. Bar chart showing flagella numbers observed in wild-type strains (CC-124 and CC125), mutant strains

(*vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2*) and the *vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2* strains expressing VFL3 constructs in *Chlamydomonas*. The numbers of cells “*n*” used for calculating ratio flagella numbers are shown on the right side of the chart. A χ^2 test was used to determine if the number of cells with zero flagella was significantly different. NS and *** indicate not significant and $p < 0.0001$ respectively. (B) Wild-type VFL3 protein localizes to *Chlamydomonas* basal bodies. In the first column, cells were stained with acetylated α -tubulin (red) for cilia and rootlet microtubules, anti-HA (green) for UNI2, and anti-GFP (magenta) for VFL3. Scale bar is 4 μ m. Magnified views (4x) of the basal body regions (white boxes) are shown on the other three columns. Scale bar is 1 μ m. (C) Localization of VFL3 is affected in the 5E mutant. In the first column, cells were stained with acetylated α -tubulin (red) for cilia and rootlet microtubules, anti-HA (green) for wild-type and mutant VFL3, and anti-BLD10/CEP135 (magenta). Scale bar is 4 μ m. Magnified views (4x) of the basal body regions (white boxes) are shown on the other three columns. Scale bar is 1 μ m. See also Figure S6.

Figure 6. Model of the role of CCDC61 in ciliary function (in *Chlamydomonas*). CCDC61 localizes to the basal body and forms filaments that bind to centriolar and/or non-centriolar microtubules. This facilitates striated fiber formation and the correct formation of basal body-associated structures, and, therefore, results in the correct cilium number. A CCDC61 mutant that does not bind microtubules (MT-binding null mutant) still localizes to the basal body region. However, the mutant is incapable of facilitating striated fiber formation, leads to incorrect formation of basal body-associated structures, and therefore causes abnormal cilium numbers.

1 **Table 1.** Data collection, phasing and refinement statistics of the CCDC61 crystal structures.

Crystal	hCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁴³	zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁶⁸ ; F129E/D130A	zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁷⁰
	SeMet (Peak)	Native	Native
Beamline	DLS I02	MRC LMB	DLS I03
Wavelength (Å)	0.9792	1.5418	0.9762
Resolution (Å)			
Overall	29.68-2.55	44.81-1.97	68.31-2.90
Outer shell	2.66-2.55	2.02-1.97	3.08-2.90
Space group	<i>P</i> 22 ₁ 2 ₁	<i>P</i> 2 ₁ 2 ₁ 2 ₁	<i>C</i> 222 ₁
Unit Cell Parameters (Å)			
<i>a</i>	36.877	55.36	93.09
<i>b</i>	68.222	76.31	100.56
<i>c</i>	180.728	83.24	135.76
Number of unique reflections	15,498	25,068	14,498
Completeness (%)	99.1 (99.7) ^a	98.2 (96.6)	100 (100)
Redundancy	5.0	7.0	5.9
^b <i>R</i> _{merge} (%)	7.7 (56.8)	10.2 (86.8)	11.3 (84.9)
< <i>I</i> /σ>	14.7 (2.3)	12.6 (2.4)	9.4 (2.0)
CC (1/2) (%)	99.8 (93.2)	99.7 (75.6)	99.9 (84.0)
Phasing method	Single anomalous diffraction	Molecular replacement	Molecular replacement
F.O.M.	0.339	N/A	N/A
Overall score	39.02	N/A	N/A

Refinement			
PDB code	6HXT	6HXV	6HXY
R_{cryst}^c (highest shell) (%)	20.81 (35.02)	17.32 (23.49)	19.99 (29.73)
R_{free}^d (highest shell) (%)	25.60 (41.38)	23.79 (31.77)	25.81 (34.88)
Number of atoms:			
Protein atoms	2900	2559	2335
Water molecules	66	299	27
Average B-factors (\AA^2)	69.81	34.75	83.16
Ramachandran favoured (%)	97.2	97.8	96.6
Ramachandran outliers (%)	0.0	0.3	0.3
Clashscore	7.59	4.30	8.68
MolProbity overall score	1.72	1.25	1.75
R.M.S.D.			
Bond (\AA)	0.004	0.008	0.008
Angle ($^\circ$)	1.080	1.098	1.203

^aThe statistics in parenthesis are for the highest resolution shell

^b $R_{\text{merge}} = \sum_h |I_h - \langle I \rangle| / \sum_h I_h$, where I_h is the intensity of reflection h , and $\langle I \rangle$ is the mean intensity of all symmetry-related reflections.

^c $R_{\text{cryst}} = \sum ||F_{\text{obs}}| - |F_{\text{calc}}|| / \sum |F_{\text{obs}}|$, F_{obs} and F_{calc} are observed and calculated structure factor amplitudes.

^d R_{free} as for R_{cryst} using a randomly selected 10% for hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ and zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰, and 5% for zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A of the data excluded from the refinement.

Table 2. Summary of *Chlamydomonas* transformation with various constructs.

Strain	Construct	Number of APHVIII transformants*	Number of <i>vfl3</i> rescued strains
<i>vfl3-1</i>	VFL3	875	3
	VFL3-FD	316	1 (partial rescued)
	VFL3-5E	449	0
<i>vfl3-2</i>	VFL3	666	8
	VFL3-FD	446	1 (partial rescued)
	VFL3-5E	970	0
	Ex7-HA-VFL3	658	5
	Ex9-HA-VFL3	133	1
	Ex7-HA-VFL3-FD	227	1 (partial rescued)
	Ex7-HA-VFL3-5E	221	0
Total		4961	19

*Transformants are identified by co-transformation with the *APHVIII* gene that confers resistance to the antibiotic paromomycin.

STAR Methods

Resource availability

Lead Contact

Further information and requests for resources and reagents should be directed to and will be fulfilled by the Lead Contact, Takashi Ochi (T.Ochi@leeds.ac.uk).

Materials availability

All unique/stable reagents generated in this study are available from the Lead Contact without restriction.

Data and Code Availability

Coordinates and structure factors of crystal structures that are presented in this paper are available in the Protein Data Bank (PDB codes: 6HXT (hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³), 6HXV (zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A) and 6HXY (zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰)).

Experimental Model and Subject Details

Human cell culture

All cells were grown in 37 °C with 5% CO₂. HEK293T cells (sex: female) were grown in D-MEM, GlutaMAX (Thermo Fisher Scientific) supplied with 10% FBS. RPE-1 cells (sex: female) were grown in D-MEM/F-12 supplied, GlutaMAX, sodium carbonate (Thermo Fisher Scientific) supplied with 0, 0.5 or 10% FBS, and 100 unit of penicillin and 100 µg/ml of streptomycin. RPE-1 and RPE-1 PuroKO that used in this study have been authenticated by STR profiling. STR profiling of HEK293T revealed a 68% match between our cells and the ATCC standard; this suggest a drift in our stock (which is fairly common for HEK293T), and thus these cells were used only for protein production (Figure S4E) and not for functional assays. In addition to these cell lines, RPE-1 PuroKO/CCDC61KO cells have been confirmed as mycoplasma free.

Xenopus embryo culture

Xenopus embryo were prepared as described previously (Hörmanseder et al., 2017). Briefly, mature *Xenopus laevis* males and females were obtained from Nasco. Females were injected with 50 units pregnant mare serum gonadotropin 3 days in advance and 500 units human chorionic gonadotropin 1 day in advance in the dorsal lymph sack to induce natural ovulation. Eggs were laid in a 1x MMR buffer (5mM HEPES pH 7.8, 100mM NaCl, 2mM KCl, 1mM MgSO₄, 2mM CaCl₂, 0.1mM EDTA). *Xenopus* embryos were cultured at 14°C in the 0.1x MMR until they reached stage 27/28. Our work with *Xenopus laevis* is covered under the Home Office Project License PPL 70/8591 and frog husbandry and all experiments were performed according to the relevant regulatory standard.

Chlamydomonas culture

Chlamydomonas reinhardtii strains were maintained on solid Sager and Granick (R) growth medium at 25°C. For electroporation, *Chlamydomonas* cells were grown in Tris-acetate phosphate (TAP) medium at 25°C under constant illumination till the cell density reached 1~3 x 10⁶ cells/ml. Transformants were selected on modified TAP medium (0.75 ml of Glacial acetic acid/1L TAP) supplied with 10 µg/ml hygromycin at 25°C. For immunofluorescence, *Chlamydomonas* cells were first resuspended in liquid M-N/5 medium for 4 hours and treated with autolysin for 30 min at 25°C before fixation of cells.

Bacterial cell culture

BL21(DE2) (New England Biolabs), C41(DE3) (Miroux and Walker, 1996) or Rosetta cells (a kind gift of Dr. John Kilmartin, MRC LMB, Cambridge, UK) were grown in LB or 2xTY media and used for protein expression and purification.

Method Details

Amino-acid sequence analysis

As summarised in Figure S1A, hCCDC61 was identified as a paralog of XRCC4 using residue 1-213 of chain A of the crystal structure of XRCC4 (PDB code: 1IK9 (Sibanda et al., 2001)) as an input for the BackPhyre webserver (Kelley and Sternberg, 2009). Candidate proteins from BackPhyre whose alignments with XRCC4 covered its head domain were further analysed using HHPred (Söding et al., 2005) and JPred (Cole et al., 2008). Criteria to be defined as XRCC4-like proteins were: a) the candidates were predicted as XRCC4-superfamily members using HHPred and b) they have secondary-structure profiles that are similar to these family members.

Orthologs of hCCDC61 (UniProt accession number: Q9Y6R9) were identified using PSI-BLAST (Altschul et al., 1997) and aligned using MUSCLE (Edgar, 2004) on SeaView (Gouy et al., 2010). A phylogenetic tree was created using the PhyML server (Guindon et al., 2010) with the default setting and 100 bootstrap replicates, and edited using FigTree (<http://tree.bio.ed.ac.uk/software/figtree/>). Secondary structure predictions were carried out using the JPred webserver.

The crystal structure of zebrafish SAS6 (PDB code: 2Y3W (van Breugel et al., 2011)) was used as a template to model a structure of human SAS6 using Modeller (Sali and Blundell, 1993). This model together with crystal structures of hCCDC61 (from this study), XRCC4, XLF and PAXX (PDB codes: 1IK9 (Sibanda et al., 2001), 2QM4 (Li et al., 2008) and 3WTD (Ochi et al., 2015) respectively) were superposed and aligned using TopMatch (Sippl and Wiederstein, 2012). Alignments were manually adjusted using SeaView.

Constructs and antibodies

The human *CCDC61* gene was codon optimized for *E. coli* and synthesized (GenScript), that of *Danio rerio* was purchased from Source BioScience and that of *Xenopus laevis* was

1 synthesized without codon optimization (Thermo Fisher Scientific). *hCCDC61* constructs
2 were PCR amplified and cloned into a pGAT3 (Peränen et al., 1996) or pSKB2LNB vector (a
3 pET28-derived vector resulting in a fusion protein containing a N-terminally, PreScission
4 protease-cleavable His₆ tag) (Fekairi et al., 2009) for bacterial expression and pEGFP-C1 or
5 pcDNA3-3xHA for human expression. NES peptides (LQLPPLERLTLD (Wen et al., 1995))
6 were added to some of *gfp-hCCDC61* constructs after short linkers (SGSS) by PCR. The
7 *zCCDC61* constructs were cloned into pSKB2LNB or a bacterial-expression plasmid
8 encoding a N-terminal His-tagged lipoyl domain from *Bacillus stearothermophilus*
9 dihydrolipoamide acetyltransferase for bacterial expression. The *xCcdc61* gene was cloned
10 into pENTR-D-TOPO vector to fuse it to RFP in pCS2+ vectors. Plasmids expressing
11 Centrin2 and Clamp were kind gifts from Dr John Wallingford (Park et al., 2008). The
12 *Centrin2* gene followed by a *bfp* gene was cloned into the pCS2+ vector. The plasmid
13 containing the *bfp* gene was a kind gift from Dr Keith Boyle (MRC LMB). A GFP-nanobody
14 gene was codon optimized for *E.coli* and synthesized (GenScript) and cloned into pHAT5
15 vector (Peränen et al., 1996). Site-directed mutagenesis was carried out by PCR using
16 forward and reverse primers encoding mutant amino acids (Table S2).

17
18 The ~4 kb *Chlamydomonas VFL3* gene, which includes ~600 bp upstream of the start codon
19 and ~700 bp downstream of the stop codon, was amplified by PCR (VFL3-1F and VFL3-7R)
20 using the CloneAmp HiFi Premix (Clontech) and cloned into the pCR2.1-TOPO vector
21 (Thermo Fisher Scientific). No rescue of *vfl3-1* was observed with this 8 Kb VFL3-TOPO
22 plasmid (short-VFL3-TOPO), presumably due to short promoter at the 5' end. Therefore, a
23 ~3.6 kb fragment upstream of *VFL3*, which include the 5' UTR and part of exon 1 of *VFL3*,
24 was amplified by PCR (CloneAmp HiFi, VFL3-NotI-F and VFL3-NdeI-R) and cloned into the
25 short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid digested with *NotI* and *NdeI* by Infusion HD cloning (Clontech).
26 This plasmid (WT-VFL3-TOPO) contains ~3.6 kb upstream of the *VFL3* start codon and it
27 rescues the *vfl3-1* mutant phenotype.

To generate the 3x HA tagged *VFL3* plasmids, a *HpaI* restriction site was introduced in-frame to either exon 7 or exon 9 via overlapping PCR by creating the restriction enzyme site in the primers. For the exon 7-*HpaI* plasmid, a 1.5 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-13F-*Afl*III and VFL3-13R-*HpaI* and a 0.2 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-14F-*HpaI* and VFL3-14R-*Sall* from the short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid. These two fragments were gel purified and used as templates in a second round of PCR using primers VFL3-13F-*Afl*III and VFL3-14R-*Sall* for a 1.7 kb fragment. This fragment was digested with *Afl*III and *Sall* and replaced the corresponding fragment from the short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid. The HA epitope tag was amplified by PCR (exon 7-*HpaI*-HA-F and R) and cloned into the *HpaI* digested plasmid via Infusion HD cloning. For the exon 9-*HpaI* plasmid, a 0.8 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-7F and VFL3-15R-*HpaI* and a 0.4 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-15F-*HpaI* and VFL3-3R from the short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid. A second round PCR was used to amplify a 1.2 kb fragment with VFL3-7F and VFL3-3R. This fragment was digested with *Sall* and *Pml*I and replaced the corresponding fragment from the short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid. The HA epitope tag was amplified by PCR (exon 9-*HpaI*-HA-F and R) and cloned into the *HpaI* digested plasmid via Infusion HD cloning. The ~3.6 kb upstream fragment described above was then introduced the exon 7-HA and exon 9-HA plasmids respectively to create exon 7-HA-VFL3 and exon 9-HA-VFL3 plasmids used in *vfl3*-2 rescue. A similar strategy was used to introduce a GFP-tag (Fuhrmann et al., 1999) in-frame to exon 7 of VFL3 at the *HpaI* site. The *UNI2::HA* gene was introduced into the *vfl3* strains by crosses so that only one integration site was present in all of the strains.

Both FD-VFL3 and 5E-VFL3 plasmids were generated by overlapping PCR. For the FD-VFL3 plasmid, a 0.4 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-8F and VFL3-FD-R and a 0.7 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-FD-F and VFL3-5R from the short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid. These two fragments were gel purified and used as templates in a second

round of PCR using primers VFL3-8F and VFL3-5R for a 1.1 kb fragment. This fragment was digested with *Afl*III and *Bbv*CI and replaced the corresponding fragment from the exon 7-HA-VFL3 plasmid. For the 5E-VFL3 plasmid, a 0.6 kb fragment was amplified by VFL3-2F and VFL3-5E-R and a 1.1 kb fragment was amplified by primers VFL3-5E-F and VFL3-6R from the short-VFL3-TOPO plasmid. These two fragments were gel purified and used as templates in a second round of PCR using primers VFL3-2F and VFL3-6R for a 1.7 kb fragment. This fragment was digested with *Bbv*CI and *Sall* and replaced the corresponding fragment from the exon 7-HA-VFL3 plasmid. All primers used to amplify *Chlamydomonas VFL3* are listed in Table S3.

The following primary antibodies were used: ARL13B (Proteintech, 17711-1-AP) 1/500 for immunofluorescent staining (IF), α -tubulin (Sigma-Aldrich, T9026) 1/500 for IF, acetylated α -tubulin antibody (Abcam, ab179484) 1/500 for IF, γ -tubulin (Sigma-Aldrich, T6557) 1/1000 for IF, GFP (Abcam, ab13970 or Thermo Fisher Scientific, 3E6, A11120) 1/2000 or 1/250 for IF, HA (a kind gift from Dr. Manu Hedge or Roche, 3F10, 11867423001) 1/200 for IF or 1/3000 for WB, centrin (a kind gift from Dr. Jeffrey L. Salisbury) 1/250 for IF, and Centrin 3 (Abnova, H00001070-M01) 1/500 for IF. Secondary antibodies used include Alexa-488-conjugated Donkey anti-rabbit (Thermo Fisher Scientific, A21206) 1/2000 for IF, Alexa-488-conjugated Goat anti-chicken (Thermo Fisher Scientific, A11039) 1/2000 for IF, Alexa-488-conjugated goat anti-rat antibody (Invitrogen, API83P) 1/500 for IF, Alexa-488-conjugated goat anti-mouse antibody (Molecular probes, A11001) 1/500 for IF, Alexa-555-conjugated Goat anti-mouse (Thermo Fisher Scientific, A21422) 1/2000 for IF, Alexa 594-conjugated chicken anti-mouse antibody (Invitrogen, A21201) 1/500 for IF, Alexa 594-conjugated goat anti-rabbit antibody (Molecular probes, A11037) 1/500 for IF, and Alexa 647-conjugated goat anti-mouse antibody (Thermo Fisher Scientific, A21235) 1/500 for IF, ATTO 647N-conjugated goat anti-rabbit antibody (Sigma-Aldrich , 40839) 1/2000 for IF and HRP-conjugated mouse anti-rabbit antibody (Santacruz Biotechnology, sc-2357) 1/3000 for WB.

Analysis of Chlamydomonas transcripts

For *Chlamydomonas* RNA isolation, $\sim 5 \times 10^8$ cells were resuspended in 10 ml nitrogen-free medium (M-N/5) for 4 hours at 25°C. The cells were collected at 500 g for 5 minutes at room temperature and the pellet was resuspended in 1 ml of Buffer RLT (reagent from Qiagen RNeasy Mini Kit) with 10 μ l of 2-mercaptoethanol. Cells were homogenized by passing through a 20-gauge needle 20 times and centrifuged at 11000 g for 5 minutes at room temperature. The supernatant was collected and RNA extraction was performed with the RNeasy Mini Kit (Qiagen) according to manufacturer's recommendation. Five micrograms of total RNA from each strain was treated with 5 U of RNase-free DNase I (Thermo Fisher Scientific) in 50 μ l reaction at 37°C for 30 minutes. The reaction was terminated by addition of 5 μ l 50 mM EDTA and heat inactivation at 65°C for 10 min. One microgram of DNase-treated RNA from each strain were added to SuperScript IV VILO Master Mix (Thermo Fisher Scientific). The reverse transcription reactions were performed according to manufacturer's recommendation with the reverse transcription temperature set to 60°C.

Protein purification

Purification of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ was carried out as follows. BL21(DE3) cells (New England Biolabs) that carried the pGAT3-hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ plasmid were grown in LB media at 37 °C till OD₆₀₀ reached between 0.6-1.0, and the gene expression was induced by 0.5 mM IPTG after cooling the cell cultures to 16 °C. The cell cultures were grown at the temperature overnight. Collected cells were suspended in 8 ml of a lysis buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 300 mM NaCl, 1 mM EDTA, 5 mM DTT, 1x cOmplete Protease Inhibitor Cocktail EDTA-free (Roche)) per gram of cells. The lysis was carried out by sonication. Cell debris were removed by centrifuging at 32,000 g for 45 min at 4 °C. The supernatant after the centrifugation was collected and loaded onto GSTrap FF 16/10 column (GE Healthcare) equilibrated with the lysis buffer without the protease inhibitor. After washing the column with

the lysis buffer, bound molecules were eluted with the same equilibrated buffer but 25 mM reduced L-glutathione. The elution was dialysed against 5L of 30 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0 150 mM NaCl, 0.5 mM EDTA, 5 mM 2-mercaptoethanol at 4°C overnight after tev protease was added. The cleaving of the His-GST tag leaves the extra amino-acid sequence Gly-Ser at the N-terminus of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³. The dialysed sample was further dialysed against 5L of 30 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0 at 4°C, 150 mM NaCl, 20 mM imidazole, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol at 4 °C for four hours. The sample was loaded onto a 5ml HisTrap HP column (GE Healthcare), and the flow through and the first 5ml wash were collected. The collected sample was diluted three-fold with 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 2 mM DTT and loaded onto a 5ml HiTrap Q HP column (GE Healthcare) equilibrated with 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The bound molecules were eluted with a linear gradient to 600 mM NaCl. Peak fractions containing hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ were collected and concentrated to 2.5 ml to load onto a PD-10 column (GE Healthcare) equilibrated with 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl, 2%(v/v) glycerol, 2 mM DTT. Purified hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ was concentrated and stored at -80 °C after snap-freezing in liquid nitrogen (Figure S7D). hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³; F128E/D129A mutant and SeMet replaced hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ were purified in a similar way.

Purification of zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A was carried out as follows. The supernatant of crude bacterial extracts containing zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A was prepared in a similar way to that of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³. However, we used C41 cells (Miroux and Walker, 1996) instead of BL21(DE3) and 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 300 mM NaCl, 10 mM imidazole, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol, 1 mM ABESF. 5ml of Ni-NTA resin (Expedion) were added to the extracts and incubated at 4 °C for 120 min. The resin was washed with 50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 300 mM NaCl, 10 mM imidazole, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol and the same buffer but 30 mM imidazole. Bound molecules were eluted with the same buffer but 300 mM imidazole. The GST-PreScission protease and EDTA at the final concentration of 0.5 mM were added to the elution, which was dialysed against 5L of 30 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl, 0.5 mM

1 EDTA, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol at 4 °C overnight. The cleaving the His tag leaves the extra
2 amino-acid sequence Gly-Pro-His at the N-terminus of zCCDC61^{1-168; F129E/D130A}. 0.5 ml of
3 glutathione sepharose 4B were added to the dialysed sample and incubated at 4 °C for 60
4 min. The supernatant was collected, diluted three-fold with 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 2 mM
5 DTT and loaded onto a 5 ml HiTrap Q HP column equilibrated with 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0,
6 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Bound molecules were eluted with a linear gradient of 400 mM
7 NaCl. Peak fractions containing zCCDC61^{1-168; F129E/D130A} were collected. The buffer of the
8 sample was exchanged to 20 mM Tris-HCl pH8.0, 100 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT by a PD-10
9 column and the protein stored at -80 °C after concentration (Figure S7D).

10 Construct zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ fused to the C-terminus of a lipoyl-domain tag (Lipo-zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰)
11 (for SEC-MALS analysis) and its F129E/D130A mutant (for SEC-MALS analysis) were
12 expressed in *E. coli* C41 in 2xTY and purified by Ni-NTA (Qiagen) beads using standard
13 methods. Subsequently, eluates were subjected to a size exclusion chromatography step in
14 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT and the purifications finished by ion-
15 exchange chromatography on a HiTrap Q-FF (GE Healthcare) column using a linear salt
16 gradient from 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 2 mM DTT to 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 2 mM DTT, 1
17 M NaCl. Proteins were concentrated and snap frozen in liquid nitrogen and stored at -80 °C.
18 To purify zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ without the lipoyl-domain tag, Lipo-zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ was incubated with
19 the tev protease after the Ni-affinity purification step. Cleaving the tag leaves the extra
20 amino-acid sequence Gly-Gly-Ser at the N-terminus of zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰. The zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰
21 solution was loaded onto a HisTrap FF column to remove the tag and tev protease and then
22 loaded onto a HiTrap Q HP column after being diluted to 175 mM NaCl concentration by 20
23 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0. The flow through fractions containing zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ were collected and
24 loaded onto a PD-10 buffer exchange column equilibrated with 10 mM Tris-HCl pH8.0, 300
25 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT and concentrated before being snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen. Lipo-
26 zCCDC61^{1-170; F129E/D130A} used for Figure 2D was purified in a similar way.

Purification of zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ was carried out as follows. A Ni-NTA affinity purification of zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ was carried out in a similar way to that of zCCDC61^{1-168; F129E/D130A} but using 500 mM NaCl in the purification buffers. GST-PreScission protease and EDTA (at a final concentration of 0.5 mM) were added to the elution. Cleaving the tag leaves the extra amino acid sequence Gly-Pro-His-Asn at the N-terminus of the protein. 1 ml of glutathione sepharose 4B were added to the sample and incubated at 4 °C for 60 min. The supernatant was collected and diluted 3-to-5 with 30 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 5 mM DTT. The diluted sample was loaded on to a 5 ml HiTrap Q HP equilibrated with 30 mM Tris-HCl pH8.0, 300 mM NaCl, 5 mM DTT. The flow through was collected and concentrated to ~3 ml before loading onto a Superdex 75 16/600 column (GE Healthcare) equilibrated with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Fractions containing zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ were collected and diluted two-fold with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5 before loading onto a 5 ml HiTrap Heparin HP column equilibrated with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 200 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Bound molecules were eluted with a linear gradient of 20 mM HEPES pH7.5, 1 M NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Fractions containing zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ were collected, and the buffer of the protein was exchanged to 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 200 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT using a PD-10 column. The sample was concentrated to a desired concentration and snap frozen in liquid nitrogen before storing at -80 °C (Figure S7D). zCCDC61^{146-280; 5E} mutant was purified in a similar way to zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰, but a HiTrap Q HP column was used instead of the HiTrap Heparin HP column. The protein has the extra amino-acid sequence Gly-Pro-His-Asp at its N-terminus.

Purification of hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹² was carried out in a similar manner to zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰. hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹² fused to the C-terminus of a lipoyl-domain tag was expressed in *E. coli* C41. All following steps were carried out at room temperature because hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹² tends to precipitate at 4 °C. After the Ni-NTA step, the eluted proteins were loaded onto a 5ml HiTrap Heparin HP column (GE Healthcare) equilibrated with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 300 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Bound proteins were eluted with a linear gradient of 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 1 M

NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Fractions containing hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹² were collected and the lipoyl tag was cleaved by adding tev protease, which leaves the extra amino-acid sequence Gly-Gly-Ser at the N-terminus of hCCDC61²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹². The cleaved sample was passed onto a 5 ml HisTrap HP column. The flow through was collected and dialysed against 3L of 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The dialysed sample was concentrated and stored at -80 °C after snap frozen in liquid nitrogen (Figure 3C).

To stabilise hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷ and hCCDC61^{144-287; 5E}, both constructs were fused to the C-terminus of residue 1-137 of PAXX (Ochi et al., 2015) and cloned into pSKB2LNB vector. The proteins were expressed and purified using Ni-NTA as described above. Eluted proteins were cleaved with the GST-PreScission protease and dialysed in 2L of 30 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol overnight supplied with 500 mM NaCl (hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷) and 200 mM NaCl (hCCDC61^{144-287; 5E}) at 4°C. The cleavage leaves the extra amino-acid sequence Gly-Pro-His at the N-terminus of these constructs. As for hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷, the dialysed sample was diluted two-fold with 20 mM Tris-HCl pH8.0, 2 mM DTT and loaded on to tandemly connected 5 ml GSTrap and HiTrap Q HP equilibrated with 30 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 300 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The flow through was loaded onto a 5 ml HiTrap Heparin HP column equilibrated with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 200 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Bound proteins were eluted with a linear gradient of 20 mM HEPES pH7.5, 1 M NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The fractions containing hCCDC61¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷ were collected and passed onto a PD-10 column equilibrated with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The purified protein was concentrated and stored at -80°C after snap freezing in liquid nitrogen (Figure 3C). As for hCCDC61^{144-287; 5E}, the dialysed sample was diluted two-fold with 50 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 5 mM 2-mercaptoethanol and loaded onto a 5 ml GSTrap column. The flow through was loaded onto a 5 ml HiTrap Q HP column equilibrated with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 100 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. Bound proteins were eluted with a linear gradient of 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 1 M NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The fractions containing hCCDC61^{144-287; 5E} were collected and

1 diluted with 20 mM HEPES pH 7.5, 200 mM NaCl, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol. The diluted
2 sample supplied with 20 mM imidazole was loaded onto a 5 ml HisTrap HP column, and the
3 flow through was collected. The protein was concentrated and diluted with 20 mM HEPES
4 pH7.5, 200 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT. The procedure was repeated three times. Finally, the
5 concentrated sample was stored at -80 °C after snap freezing in liquid nitrogen (Figure S4D).

6 For purification of ¹⁵N-labelled human SAS6, DNA encoding human SAS6¹⁻¹⁴³ was cloned
7 into pSKB2LNB vector. This construct was expressed in *E. coli* Rosetta in minimal medium
8 containing ¹⁵NH₄Cl and purified by standard methods using Ni-NTA (Qiagen)
9 chromatography. The eluate was dialyzed (in the presence of GST-PreScission protease)
10 against 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 2 mM DTT and further purified by ion-exchange
11 chromatography on a HiTrap Q-FF (GE Healthcare) column using a linear salt gradient from
12 0 mM to 1 M NaCl in 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 2 mM DTT followed by size exclusion
13 chromatography in 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT (Figure S7D).

14
15 GFP nanobody was purified based on a published protocol (Kubala et al., 2010). BL21(DE3)
16 cells that carried the pHAT5-GFP-nanobody plasmid were grown in 6L of LB media at 37 °C
17 till OD₆₀₀ reached between 0.6-1.0, and the gene expression was induced by 1 mM IPTG
18 after cooling the cell cultures to 16 °C. The cell cultures were grown at the temperature
19 overnight. Collected cells were suspended in 5 ml of a lysis buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0,
20 300 mM NaCl, 5%(v/v) glycerol, 0.1%(v/v) NP-40, 10 mM imidazole, 1x cOmplete Protease
21 Inhibitor Cocktail EDTA-free) per gram of cells. The lysis was carried out by sonication. Cell
22 debris were removed by centrifuging at 27,000 g for 30 min at 4 °C. The supernatant after
23 the centrifugation was collected and loaded onto 2x 5ml HisTrap HP columns (GE
24 Healthcare) equilibrated with the lysis buffer without the protease inhibitor. The column was
25 washed with 50 mM HEPES pH7.5, 1 M NaCl, 0.2%(v/v) NP-40, 50 mM imidazole and 50
26 mM HEPES pH7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 50 mM imidazole. The bound molecules were eluted with

50 mM HEPES pH7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 300 mM imidazole. The elution was dialysed against 5L of 0.2 M NaHCO₃ pH8.3, 500 mM NaCl at 4°C overnight. Dialysed GFP nanobody was concentrated and stored at -80 °C after snap-freezing in liquid nitrogen.

Protein crystallization

SeMet hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ was crystallized at 20°C in a hanging drop containing 10 mg/ml of the protein and 8% (w/v) PEG6,000, 100 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.3 in a 1:1 ratio. zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸;

F129E/D130A was crystallized at 20°C in a sitting drop containing 10 mg/ml of the protein and 8% (w/v) PEG 6,000, 100 mM Bicine pH 9.0, 3% Trimethylamine N-Oxide in a 1:1 ratio.

zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ was crystallized at 20°C in a sitting drop containing 4.62 mg/ml of the protein and 100 mM Citric acid pH 5.0, 1 M LiCl in a 1:1 ratio. Single crystals of the proteins were dipped into cryo-protection solutions, which were 70% reservoir and 30% ethylene glycol, and flash frozen in liquid nitrogen.

X-ray crystallography

Diffraction images of the crystals were collected at I02 in Diamond Light Source (DLS) for SeMet hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³, at MRC LMB using an in-house X-ray diffraction machine (RIGAKU FR-E+ SuperBright) for zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A and at I03 in DLS for zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰. The

collected data were indexed and integrated using XDS (Kabsch, 2010) for the SeMet

hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ data, iMOSFLM (Battye et al., 2011) for zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A and

zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ data, and scaled using Aimless (Evans, 2011), which were run from CCP4

program suite (Winn et al., 2011). The phenix.autosol module of PHENIX suite (Adams et al., 2010) was used to calculate phases for structure factors of the SeMet hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³

data by the SAD method. Phases for structure factors of the zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A or

zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ data were determined by the phenix.phaser module using the structure of

SeMet hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ or zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁶⁸; F129E/D130A as a probe for molecular replacement

respectively. The initial structures were build using the phenix.autobuild module. The models

were refined manually using Coot (Emsley et al., 2010) and computationally using the phenix.refine module until no further improvements of the map were observed. TLS groups were selected as each chain for hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ and as each chain divided into two groups (from N-terminus to residue 144 and from 145 to the C-terminus) for zCCDC61^{1-168; F129E/D130A} and zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰. Non-crystallographic symmetry restraints were not applied for the refinement of these structures. For the refinement of zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰, E129 and A130 of zCCDC61^{1-168; F129E/D130A} were replaced with F129 and D130, and the model was refined as described above. The final structural models were validated using MolProbity (Williams et al., 2018) run from PHENIX suite. All protein-structure graphics were produced using PyMOL (Schrödinger, LLC, 2015).

Analytical ultracentrifugation

hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ and hCCDC61^{1-143; F128E/D129A} at approximately 480 μ M (7.9 mg/ml) in 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT were subjected to velocity sedimentation at 50,000 rpm at 4 °C in an An50Ti rotor using an Optima XL-I analytical ultracentrifuge (Beckmann). The data were analysed in SEDFIT 15.0 (Schuck, 2003) using a c(s) distribution model. The partial-specific volumes (v -bar), solvent density and viscosity were calculated using Sednterp (Dr Thomas Laue, University of New Hampshire). To determine the dissociation for dimerization, K_d , of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ homodimer, 110 μ L with total protein concentrations of 12, 4 and 1.3 mg/ml were loaded in 12 mm 6-sector cells and centrifugated at 11,600, 19,700 and 34,000 rpm at 4 °C until equilibrium had been reached. Data were processed and analysed using SEDPHAT 13b (Schuck, 2003). Data were plotted with the program GUSI (Brautigam, 2015).

SEC-MALS

The mass and hydrodynamic radius of CCDC61 constructs in solution was determined using SEC-MALS as described previously (van Breugel et al., 2011). SEC was in 10mM Tris-HCl

pH 7.4, 150mM NaCl (1, 6.5 and 65 mg/ml of His₆-lipoyl-zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ and 1, 6.8 and 73 mg/ml of its F129E/D130A mutant). SEC used a Superdex S200 10/300 column (GE Healthcare) running at 0.5 ml/min. The concentrations quoted are at loading and these will be at least 10 times lower during chromatography due to dilution on the column. Experiments were performed at room temperature. Since the coiled-coil regions present in His₆-lipoyl-zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰ and its mutant are very short (~20 amino acids), coiled-coil dimerization is inefficient, explaining the presence of monomer species in the SEC-MALS runs.

Circular Dichroism (CD)

Purified zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ and its 5E mutant were dialyzed against 1L of 20 mM sodium phosphate pH7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 1 mM TCEP at 4°C overnight and adjusted to a concentration of 0.375 mg/ml. The CD measurement was done at 5 °C. Far-UV CD spectra at 5°C and thermal melts at 222 nm were measured using a Jasco J815 spectropolarimeter (JASCO (UK) Ltd) in 20 mM sodium phosphate pH7.5, 500 mM NaCl, 1 mM TCEP. Following dialysis into this buffer, samples of zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ and its 5E mutant were diluted to 0.375 mg/ml and measured in a 1 mm pathlength cuvette. Thermal melts were performed at a heating rate of 1C°/min.

NMR

NMR data were collected at 20°C on a Bruker Avance II+ 700 MHz spectrometer, equipped with a cryogenic triple-resonance TCI probe. 2D ¹H,¹⁵N BEST-Trosy data sets for 56 μM of ¹⁵N-labelled hSAS6¹⁻¹⁴³ on its own and in the presence of 48 μM of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ were acquired in 20 mM Tris pH8.0, 150 mM NaCl and 2 mM DTT. Data were processed using Topspin 3.0 (Bruker) and analyzed using SPARKY (T. D. Goddard and D. G. Kneller – University of California, San Francisco).

Microtubule pelleting assay

Taxol-stabilised microtubules were prepared as described on Anthony Hyman's lab website (http://hymanlab.mpi-cbg.de/hyman_lab/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Tubulin-Protocols-Mitchison.pdf). All centrifugation steps were carried out in 7 x 20 mm polycarbonate-centrifuge tubes using a TLA100 rotor and Optima TL ultracentrifuge (Beckman Culture). 20 μ M Tubulin purified from pig brains (a kind gift of Dr. Andrew Carter, MRC LMB, Cambridge, UK) were polymerised at 37 °C in BRB80 (80 mM PIPES pH 6.8, 1 mM $MgCl_2$, 1 mM EGTA) supplied with 1 mM GTP and 1 mM DTT by adding 1/10 volume of 2, 20 and 200 μ M of Taxol stepwise. Taxol-stabilized microtubule were pelleted by centrifugation at 70,000 rpm for 12 min at 25 °C. The microtubule pellets were resuspended in the reaction buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl pH7.4, 200 mM NaCl, 1 mM DTT, 20 μ M Taxol). In order to find an optimal tubulin / subtilisin ratio for removing the tubulin C-termini, we first mixed 2 mg/ml tubulins with a four-fold dilution series of subtilisin A (Sigma-Aldrich) starting from 1:1 weight ratio. This experiment was performed at 37°C for 15 min. The digestion reaction was terminated by adding 10 mM PMSF and incubated at 37°C for 5 min before being centrifuged to pellet microtubules. 20 μ M of CCDC61 constructs in the reaction buffer were spun at 70,000 rpm for 12 min at 25 °C. 45 μ l of the supernatant of each construct were mixed with the equal volume of 20 μ M of the stabilized microtubules in reaction buffer. The mixed samples were incubated at RT for 15 min. 85 μ l of the mixed samples were centrifuged through a cushion of 50 μ l of the reaction buffer supplied with 40%(v/v) glycerol at 70,000 rpm for 30 min at 25 °C. The supernatants and pellets were analyzed using SDS-PAGE. Mixed samples before the ultracentrifugation step were also used for negative-stain EM visualization.

Knockout and knockdown of hCCDC61

Knockout of CCDC61 in RPE-1 PuroKO cells (Balmus et al., 2019) was done using methods and reagents as described before (Chiang et al., 2016). Briefly, two target sites in exon 1 of CCDC61 (5'-GGAAGACGTAGTCCACCTGCAGG-3' and 5'-

GGAGCATGCCGTGCGGGTGATGG-3') of Cas9 were designed by CRISPR DESIGN (Hsu et al., 2013). The all-in-one plasmid encoding these sites (AIO-GFP-hCCDC61) was transfected to RPE-1 cells by electroporation using the NEON transfection system (Thermo Fisher). After 48 hours, GFP-positive cells were FACS sorted in three 96-well plates at the Cambridge Stem Cell Institute, University of Cambridge. Cells were incubated at 37 °C in 5% CO₂ about a month till they became confluent. Genomic DNAs of the cells were extracted using QuickExtract DNA extraction solution (Cambio) and subjected to PCR using two primers (5'-TTCCAGGGTTCCATGGGTCTAGGTTTCTCTCTCATCTCCTT-3' and 5'-CGAGGTGACGAATTCGGCACACTCACAGCCAGCATCGAA-3'). The PCR products were cloned into a pHAT4 (Peränen et al., 1996) vector to be sequenced. Two clones that had inserts causing premature stop codons in both alleles of the exon (Figure S5A) were selected for further studies. For counting of the centriole number, parental and CCDC61 knockout cell lines were treated with 100 µM monastrol (Sigma-Aldrich) for 4 hours. For ciliation assay, cells were serum starved in media containing 0.5% FBS for 24 and 48 hours. To determine proliferation kinetics, cells were seeded in 12 well plate at 5x10³ cells/well and real-time quantitative live cell analysis was carried out for 96 hours using IncuCyte ZOOM (Essen BioScience), imaging 9 positions per well every 3 hours.

Knockdown of CCDC61 was carried out by transfecting three different Silencer Select siRNAs (siRNA IDs: s59736 as siRNA 1, s59737 as siRNA 2 and s59738 as siRNA 3) (Life Technologies) or (Ambion control siRNA) to RPE-1 cells. Briefly, RPE-1 cells were transfected with Lipofectamine RNAiMAX reagent (Thermo Fischer Scientific). The siRNAs were used at a final concentration of 60 nM and the siRNA treatments were carried out for 72 hours after transfection. To assess ciliation, 48 hours after siRNA transfection RPE-1 cells were serum starved in media containing 0.5% FBS for 24 hours. Knockdown efficiencies were assessed by reverse transcription PCR (RT-PCR) using a forward primer

(5'-TGCAGCGATTTGGAGGATTT-3') and a reverse primer (5'-CGGAGTTGGCCAGAGATTTC-3').

Fluorescent and immunofluorescent microscopy

GFP-hCCDC61 constructs were transfected to RPE-1 cells using Lipofectamine 3000 (Thermo Fisher Scientific) by mixing 500 ng of each pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61 construct with 1 µl of P3000 reagent and 1 µl of Lipofectamine 3000 reagent in Opti-MEM (Thermo Fisher Scientific) before adding the mixture to the cells grown on a coverslip in a well of a 24-well plate. After 24 hours of transfection, cells were fixed with 4% (w/v) formaldehyde for fluorescent microscopy or cold methanol and stained with antibodies for immunofluorescent microscopy as indicated in the main text. ProLong Diamond Antifade Mountant (Thermo Fisher Scientific) was used as a mounting media. Confocal images of fixed cells were taken using a Confocal White Light Laser (WLL) Leica TCS SP8 Microscope with the HC Plan Apo 40x/1.30 63x/1.40 or 100 x/1.40 OIL (CS2) objective or a Zeiss LSM880 AxioObserver with Plan-Apochromat 40x/1.40. Image acquisition was carried out with the Leica Application Suite X (LAS X) software (Leica Microsystems) or Zen software (Zeiss). Wide-field images of fixed cells (Figure 4C) were taken using the Nikon Eclipse TE2000 Inverted Microscope with the Plan Apo VC 60 x or 100 x/1.40 OIL objective. After acquisition, images were imported into Fiji (Schindelin et al., 2012) to obtain maximum intensity projections of entire z-stacks. Fiji and Photoshop (Adobe CC 2017) were used to perform level adjustment. The immunofluorescent image shown in Figure 4A was generated by deconvoluting the original image using Huygens Professional (Scientific Volume Imaging). For *Chlamydomonas* immunofluorescence, $\sim 10^7$ *Chlamydomonas* cells were first resuspended in 0.5 ml M-N/5 medium for 4 hours to allow flagellar assembly. Cells were then treated with autolysin for 30 min at 25°C to remove cell walls, followed by resuspension in 1 ml MTSB (microtubule stabilization buffer, 30 mM HEPES, pH 7.4, 5 mM MgSO₄, 15 mM KCl, 2 mM EGTA) at room temperature. Fifty microliters of cells were applied to a 0.1% poly-L-Lysine (Sigma-Aldrich)

coated well on a multi-well slide (Thermo Fisher Scientific) for 2 minutes in the dark. Excess cell suspension was removed by pipetting. Fifty microliters of lysis buffer (MTSB + 1% NP-40) was added to each well to lyse the cells for 2 minutes at room temperature. MTSB was used to wash individual wells once and removed by pipetting. Samples were fixed with MTSB + 4% paraformaldehyde for 30 minutes at room temperature. Excess liquid was removed by pipetting before slides were submerged in cold methanol (-20°C) for 2×5 min and left to dry at room temperature. The remained nucleo-flagellar apparatuses attached to the wells were rehydrated with the addition of PBS (phosphate-buffered saline) for 10 minutes at room temperature. After rehydration, the samples were blocked with 100% blocking buffer (5% BSA and 1% fish gelatin in PBS) for 1 hour at room temperature, followed by inoculation with primary antibodies (diluted with 20% blocking buffer) at 4°C overnight. The samples were washed six times with 20% blocking buffer, followed by 1 hour inoculation at room temperature with secondary antibodies diluted with 20% blocking buffer. The samples were washed six times with 20% blocking buffer and mounted in Fluoromount-G (Southern Biotech). The images were captured with an UltraVIEW VoX laser spinning disk confocal microscope (PerkinElmer) and acquired by Volocity software (PerkinElmer).

Live cell imaging

RPE-1 cells were grown on a chambered cover glass (Grace Bio-Labs) in D-MEM/F-12 without phenol red (Thermo Fisher Scientific) supplied with 10% FBS, and 100 units of penicillin and 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ of streptomycin and transfected with GFP-hCCDC61 using Lipofectamine 3000 (Thermo Fisher Scientific). After 24 hours, the media were replaced with the same media with 0.1% (v/v) DMSO or with 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ nocodazole, and confocal fluorescent images of GFP positive RPE-1 cells were taken using a Zeiss LSM880 AxioObserver with Plan-Apochromat 40x/1.40, maintained at 37°C , at time points 0, 60, 120, and 180 min.

GFP pulldown assays

HEK293T cells were grown nearly confluent in 10 cm dishes containing D-MEM glutaMAX (Thermo Fisher Scientific) supplied with 10% FBS. A GFP construct (pEGFP-C1, pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61^{1-457; F128E/D129A} or pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61^{1-457; F128E/D129A/5E}) and HA construct (pcDNA3-3xHA-hCCDC61^{1-457; F128E/D129A} or pcDNA3-3xHA-hCCDC61^{1-457; F128E/D129A/5E}) were co-transfected into the cells using PEI (Polysciences) as indicated in Fig. S4E. The cells were collected after 24 hours of the transfection. GFP-affinity resins were prepared by conjugating purified GFP nanobody to NHS-activated resins (GE Healthcare). The cells were lysed in 1 ml of 50 mM Tris pH 7.4, 200 mM NaCl, 0.2 % (v/v) NP-40, 10% (v/v) glycerol, 1x cOmplete Protease Inhibitor Cocktail EDTA-free on ice for 30 min. Debris was removed by centrifuging at 21,000 g, 4 °C for 30 min. 30 µl of the GFP affinity resins were added to the supernatant and incubated on a rotating disk at 4 °C for 90 min. The resins were washed five times with the lysis buffer and mixed with 30 µl of 2x SDS sample buffer. Eluted proteins were separated by SDS-PAGE and subject to western blot.

Xenopus embryos

Xenopus Laevis embryos culture and injection were carried out as described (Hörmanseder et al., 2017). xCCDC61-RFP (0.1ng), Centrin2-BFP (0.25ng) and Clamp-GFP (0.25ng) mRNAs were injected in one cell stage embryos. Following injection embryos were cultured at 14 °C to the tailbud stage (stage 27/28 (Faber and Nieuwkoop, 1994)). Embryos were then fixed for 15 min in MEMFA (100mM MOPS PH6.8, 2mM EGTA, 1mM MgSO₄, 4% formaldehyde), washed 3X in 0.1X MBS (MBS (Barth-Hepes Saline) 10X stock : 88 mM NaCl, 1 mM KCl, 2,4 mM NaHCO₃, 0.82 mM MgSO₄, 0.33 mM Ca(NO₃)₂, 0.41 mM CaCl₂, 10 mM HEPES pH 7.4-7.6), and equilibrated overnight at 4 °C in 0.1X MBS 50% glycerol. The fixed whole embryos were mounted onto glass slides with ProLong Diamond Antifade Mountant (Thermo Fisher Scientific) and sandwiched with coverslips using a few layers of electrical tape as spacers (Werner and Mitchell, 2013) for confocal imaging.

FACS

The day before FACS experiments, 0.5×10^6 RPE-1 cells were seeded onto each well of a 6-well plate containing 2 ml of the RPE-1 growth media per well. On the next day, Hoechst 33342 (EMP Biotech) was added to the media at the final concentration of 2 μ M and incubated at 37 °C with 5% CO₂ for 60 min before the cells were trypsinized and pelleted. The cells were re-suspended in 500 μ l of PBS and analysed by flow cytometry using an iCyt EC800 cell analyser (Sony Biotechnology). The resulting cell-cycle distribution of cell singlets was determined using FCS EXPRESS 6 Flow software (De Novo Software).

Electron microscopy

For negative staining, 3 μ l of sample were applied onto a 400-mesh carbon-coated copper grid (EMS) that was glow discharged and incubated for 1 min at room temperature. After blotting onto filter paper, the grid was washed twice with 5 μ l of water and stained with 5 μ l of 2%(w/v) uranium acetate for 1 min. The grid was then blotted onto filter paper and air dried. Micrographs were collected using a Tecnai T12 (FEI) operated at 120 kV and equipped with an Orius SC200 or Ultrascan 1000 XP CCD detector (Gatan). Widths of microtubules were measured using Fiji.

Quantification and Statistical Analysis

We calculated average and standard deviation values using AVERAGE and STDEV functions in Microsoft Excel for Fig. 3A, 3E, 4C, S4B, S5B and S5B, and in GraphPad Prism for Fig. S5E. For Figure 5A, χ^2 analysis was performed using the website (<https://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/chisquare/>). The number of cells with no cilia and the total number of cells were used in pairwise calculations. Sample sizes n are provided in figure legends. For the statistical analysis of X-ray crystallography data, details are provided below.

1 Key Resource Table

REAGENT or RESOURCE	Source	Identifier
Antibodies		
Rabbit anti-ARL13B	Proteintech	17711-1-AP
Mouse anti-alpha-tubulin	Sigma-Aldrich	T9026
Rabbit anti-acetylated-alpha-tubulin	Abcam	ab179484
Mouse anti-gamma-tubulin	Sigma-Aldrich	T6557
Chicken anti-GFP	Abcam	ab13970
Mouse anti-GFP	Thermo Fisher Scientific	A11120
Rabbit anti-HA	Gift from Dr Manu Hedge	N/A
Rat anti-HA	Roche	118674230001
Mouse anti-centrin	Gift from Dr Jeffrey L. Salisbury	N/A
Mouse anti-centrin 3	Abnova	H00001070-M01
Bacterial strains		
BL21(DE3)	New England Biolabs	C2527
C41(DE3)	Miroux and Walker, 1996	N/A
Rosetta (DE3)	Gift from Dr John Kilmartin	N/A
Chemicals, Peptides, and Recombinant Proteins		
D-MEM Glutamax	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # 10566016
D-MEM/F-12, supplied, GlutaMAX, sodium carbonate	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # 31331028

D-MEM/F-12 without phenol red	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # 21041025
Opti-MEM	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # <u>31985062</u>
CloneAmp HiFi Premix	Clontech	Catalog # 639298
In-Fusion HD cloning	Clontech	Catalog # 638933
RNeasy Mini Kit	Qiagen	Catalog # 74104
RNase-free DNase I	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # EN0521
SuperScript IV VILO Master Mix	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # 11756050
QuickExtract DNA extract solution	Cambio	Catalog # QE0950
0.1% poly-L-Lysine	Sigma-Aldrich	Catalog # P8920
Ni-NTA resin	Expedion	Catalog # ANN0100
Ni-NTA	Qiagen	Catalog # 30210
Glutathione sepharose 4B	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17075601
NHS-activated sepharose 4 Fast Flow	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17090601
Tev protease	Homemade	N/A
GST-PreScission protease	Homemade	N/A
Tubulin	Gift from Dr Andrew Carter	N/A
Subtilisin A	Sigma-Aldrich	Catalog # P5380
Monastrol	Sigma-Aldrich	Catalog # M8515
ProLong Diamond Antifade Mountant	Thermo Fisher	Catalog # P36970

	Scientific	
Fluoromount-G	Southern Biotech	Catalog # 0100-01
Hoechst 33342	EMP Biotech	Catalog # F-0409
PEI	Polysciences	Catalog # 24765
Lipofectamine 3000	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # L3000001
Lipofectamine RNAiMAX	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # 13778150
Deposited Data		
Human XRCC4-DNA Ligase IV complex	Sibanda et al., 2001	PDB code: 1IK9
Human XLF	Li et al., 2008	PDB code: 2QM4
Human XRCC4-XLF complex	Wu et al., 2011	PDB code: 3W03
The N-terminal head domain of zebrafish SAS6	van Breugel et al., 2011	PDB code: 2Y3V
N-terminal head domain and beginning of coiled coil domain of Zebrafish SAS6	van Breugel et al., 2011	PDB code: 2Y3W
N-terminal domain of <i>C. elegans</i> SAS6	Hilbert et al., 2013	PDB code: 3PYI
N-terminal fragment of <i>L. major</i> SAS6	Van Breugel et al., 2014	PDB code: 4CKP
Human PAXX	Ochi et al., 2015	PDB code: 3WTD
hCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁴³ structure	This paper	PDB code: 6HXT
zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁶⁸ ; F129E/D130A structure	This paper	PDB code: 6HXV
zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁷⁰ structure	This paper	PDB code: 6HXY
Experimental Models: Cell Lines		
HEK293T	ATCC	ATCC: CRL-3216

RPE-1	Gift from Prof. Colin A. Johnson	N/A
RPE-1 PuroKO	Balmus et al., 2019	N/A
RPE-1 CCDC61 KO clone 1 and 2	this paper	N/A
Experimental Models: Organisms/Strains		
vfl3-1	Chlamydomonas Resource Center	CC-1686
vfl3-2	this paper	N/A
Oligonucleotides		
siRNA 1	Thermo Fisher Scientific	siRNA ID: s59736
siRNA 2	Thermo Fisher Scientific	siRNA ID: s59737
siRNA 3	Thermo Fisher Scientific	siRNA ID: s59738
Control siRNA	Thermo Fisher Scientific	siRNA ID: 4390084
<i>hCCDC61</i> knockout target sequence 1: GGAAGACGTAGT CCACCTGCAGG	This paper	N/A
<i>hCCDC61</i> knockout target sequence 2: GGAGCATGCCGT GCGGGTGATGG	This paper	N/A
RT-PCR primer forward: TGCAGCGATTTG GAGGATTT	This paper	N/A
RT-PCR primer reverse: CGGAGTTGGCCA GAGATTTC	This paper	N/A

Primers used for site-directed mutagenesis of human and zebrafish CCDC61, and human genomic DNA PCR in Table S2	N/A	N/A
Primers used to amplify <i>Chlamydomonas</i> VFL3 are listed in Table S3	N/A	N/A
Recombinant DNA		
hCCDC61	Synthesized by GenScript	UniProt: Q9Y6R9
zCCDC61	Source BioScience	IMAGE ID: 7406569. UniProt: Q08CF3
xCCDC61	Synthesized by Thermo Fisher Scientific	NCBI accession number: XP_018084688.1
PAXX	Ochi et al., 2015	N/A
GFP nanobody	Synthesized by GenScript	N/A
pGAT3-hCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁴³	this paper	N/A
pGAT3-hCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁴³ ; F128E/D129A	this paper	N/A
pSKB2LNB-zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁶⁸ ; F129E/D130A	this paper	N/A
Lipo-zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁷⁰	this paper	N/A
Lipo-zCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁷⁰ ; F129E/D130A	this paper	N/A
pSKB2LNB-zCCDC61 ¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰	this paper	N/A
pSKB2LNB-zCCDC61 ¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ ; 5E	this paper	N/A
pSKB2LNB-PAXX ¹⁻¹³⁷ -hCCDC61 ¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷	this paper	N/A
pSKB2LNB-PAXX ¹⁻¹³⁷ -hCCDC61 ¹⁴⁴⁻²⁸⁷ ; 5E	this paper	N/A

pSKB2LNB-hSAS6 ¹⁻¹⁴³	this paper	N/A
pHAT5-GFP-nonobody	this paper	N/A
short-VFL3-TOPO	this paper	N/A
WT-VFL3-TOPO	this paper	N/A
pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61	this paper	N/A
pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61 ^{F128E/D129A}	this paper	N/A
pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61 ^{144-287-NES}	this paper	N/A
pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61 ²⁸⁸⁻⁵¹²	this paper	N/A
pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61 ¹⁻⁴⁵⁷ ; F128E/D128A	this paper	N/A
pEGFP-C1-hCCDC61 ¹⁻⁴⁵⁷ ; F128E/D129A/5E	this paper	N/A
pcDNA3-3xHA-hCCDC61 ¹⁻⁴⁵⁷ ; F128E/D128A	this paper	N/A
pcDNA3-3xHA-hCCDC61 ¹⁻⁴⁵⁷ ; F128E/D129A/5E	this paper	N/A
pENTR-D-TOPO-xCCDC61	this paper	N/A
pCS2+-xCCDC61-RFP	this paper	N/A
pCS2+-Centrin2-BFP	this paper	N/A
pCS2+-Clamp-GFP	Park et al., 2008	N/A
AIO-GFP-hCCDC61	this paper	N/A
pGAT3	Peränen et al., 1996	Addgene (112589)
pHAT4	Peränen et al., 1996	Addgene (112585)
pHAT5	Peränen et al., 1996	Addgene (112586)
pSKB2LNB	Fekairi et al., 2009	N/A
pcEGFP-C1	Clontech	Catalog # 6084-1

pcDNA3	Invitrogen	Catalog # A-150228
AIO-GFP	Chiang et al., 2016	Addgene (74119)
pENTR-D-TOPO	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # K240020
pCR2.1-TOPO	Thermo Fisher Scientific	Catalog # K455001
Software and Algorithms		
Jpred	Drozdetskiy et al., 2015	http://www.compbio.dundee.ac.uk/jpred/
BackPhyre	Kelly and Sternberg, 2009	http://www.sbg.bio.ic.ac.uk/phyre2/html/page.cgi?id=index
HHPred	Söding et al., 2005	https://toolkit.tuebingen.mpg.de/tools/hhpred
PSI-BLAST	Altschul et al., 1997	https://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Blast.cgi?CMD=Web&PAGE=Proteins&PROGRAM=blastp&RUN_PSI_BLAST=on
MUSCLE	Edgar, 2004	https://www.drive5.com/muscle/
BOXSHADE	N/A	https://embnet.vital-it.ch/software/BOX_form.html
SIAS server	N/A	http://imed.med.ucm.es/Tools/sias.html
SeaView	Gouy et al., 2010	http://doua.prabi.fr/software/seaview
PhyML	Guindon et al., 2010	http://www.atgc-montpellier.fr/phyml/
FigTree	N/A	http://tree.bio.ed.ac.uk/software/figtree/
Modeller	Sali and Blundell, 1993	https://salilab.org/modeller/
TopMatch	Sippl and Wiedersheim, 2012	https://topmatch.services.came.sbg.ac.at/
XDS	Kabsch, 2010	http://xds.mpimf-heidelberg.mpg.de/
CCP4 program suite	Winn et al., 2011	https://www.ccp4.ac.uk/ccp4i_main.php

iMOSFLM	Battye et al., 2011	Run from CCP4 program suite
Aimless	Evans, 2011	Run from CCP4 program suite
PHENIX suite	Adams et al., 2010	https://www.phenix-online.org/
MolProbity		Run from PHENIX suite
Coot	Emsley et al., 2010	https://www2.mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk/personal/pemsley/coot/
PyMOL	N/A	https://pymol.org/2/
Consurf	Glaser et al., 2003	https://consurf.tau.ac.il/
SEDFIT	Schuck, 2003	http://www.analyticalultracentrifugation.com/sedfit.htm
Sedntrep	Dr Tomas Laue, University of New Hampshire	N/A
SEDPHAT	Schuck, 2003	http://www.analyticalultracentrifugation.com/sedphat/default.htm
GUSSI	Brautigam, 2015	http://biophysics.swmed.edu/MBR/software.html
Topspin	Bruker	N/A
SPARKY	T. D. Goddard and D. G. Kneller, University of California	https://www.cgl.ucsf.edu/home/sparky/
CRISPR DESIGN	Hsu et al., 2013	No longer available
LAS X	Leica	N/A
Zen	Zeiss	N/A
Volocity	Perkin Elmer	N/A
Fiji	Schindelin et al., 2012	https://imagej.net/Fiji/Downloads
Photoshop	Adobe	N/A
Huygens Professional	Scientific	N/A

	Volume Imaging	
FCS EXPRESS 6	De Novo Software	N/A
Prism	GraphPad	N/A
Social Science Statistics	N/A	https://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/chisquare/
Other		
GSTrap FF 16/10	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 28936550
GSTrap HP	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17528202
HisTrap HP	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17524801
HisTrap FF	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17525501
HiTrap Q HP	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17115401
HiTrap Q FF	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17515601
HiTrap Heparin HP	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17040701
PD-10 desalting column	GE Healthcare Life Sciences	Catalog # 17085101
Superdex 75 16/600	GE Healthcare	Catalog # 28989333

	are Life Science s	
Superdex S200 10/300	GE Healthc are Life Science s	Catalog # 17517501
16 Chambered cover glass	Grace Bio- Labs	Catalog # 112358
Multi-spot slide	Thermo Fisher Scientifi c	Catalog # 9991090
400 mesh carbon- coated copper grids	Electron Microsc opy Science s	Catalog # CF400-Cu-50

Figure 5-movie supplement 1. Related to Figure 5. Localization of wild-type VFL3 to *Chlamydomonas* basal bodies. Cells were stained with acetylated α -tubulin (red) for cilia and rootlet microtubules, anti-HA (green) for UNI2, and anti-GFP (magenta) for VFL3. Z-stacked images start from the distal ends of basal bodies (labeled by positions of UNI2) and move towards the proximal ends. Scale bar is 0.8 μ m.

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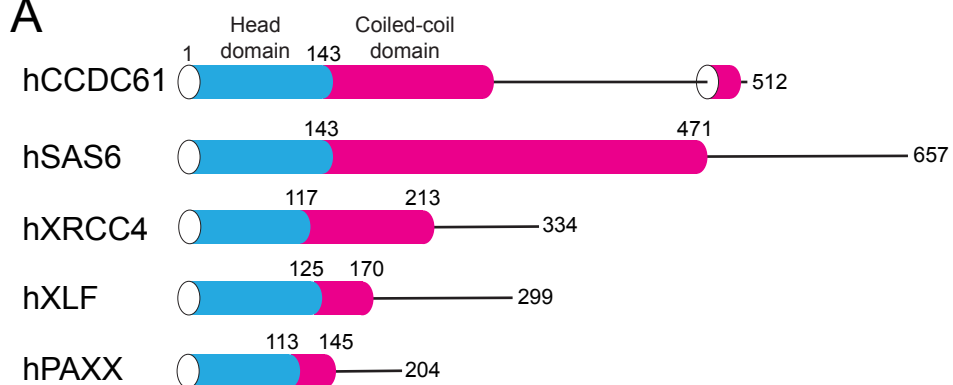
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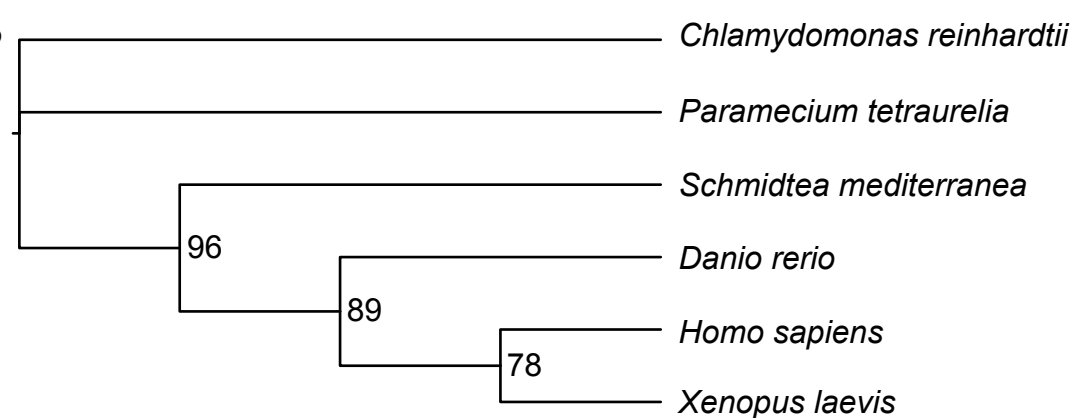
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Figure 1

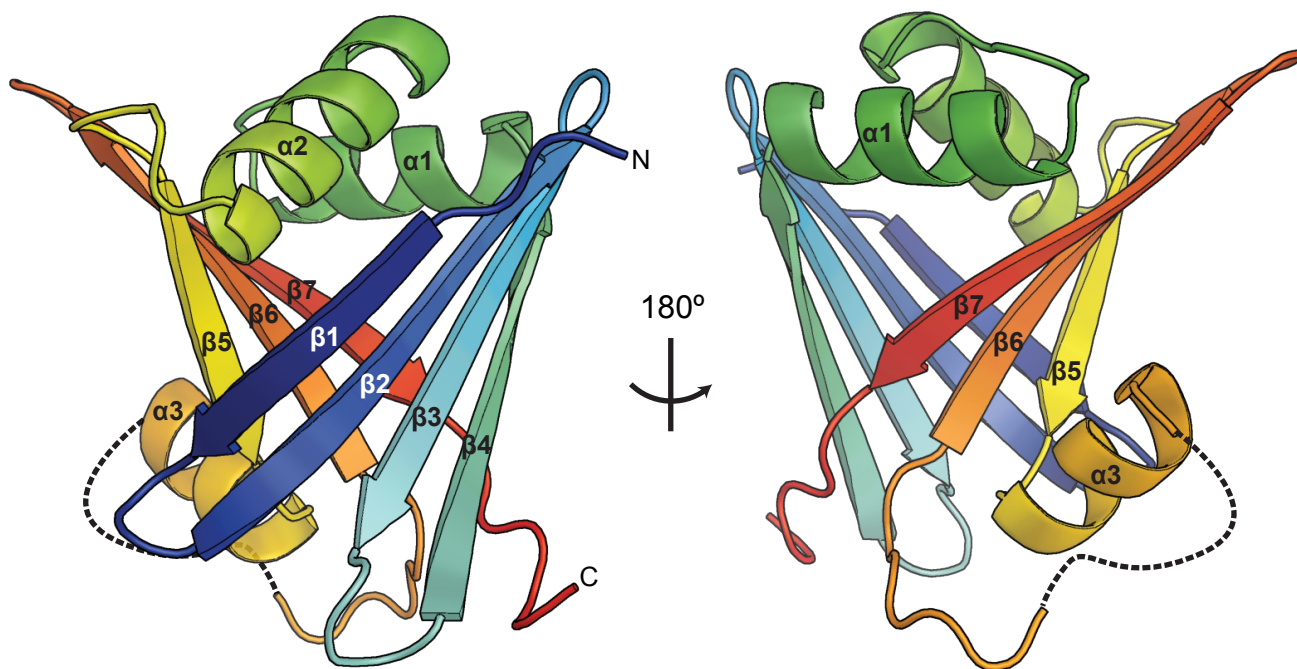
A



B



C



D

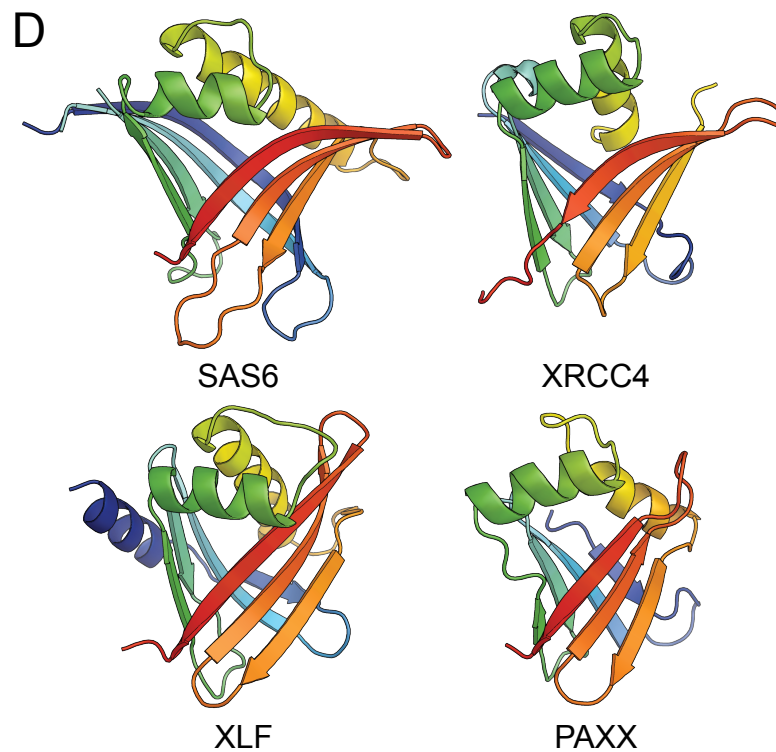
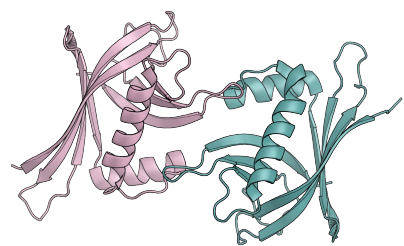
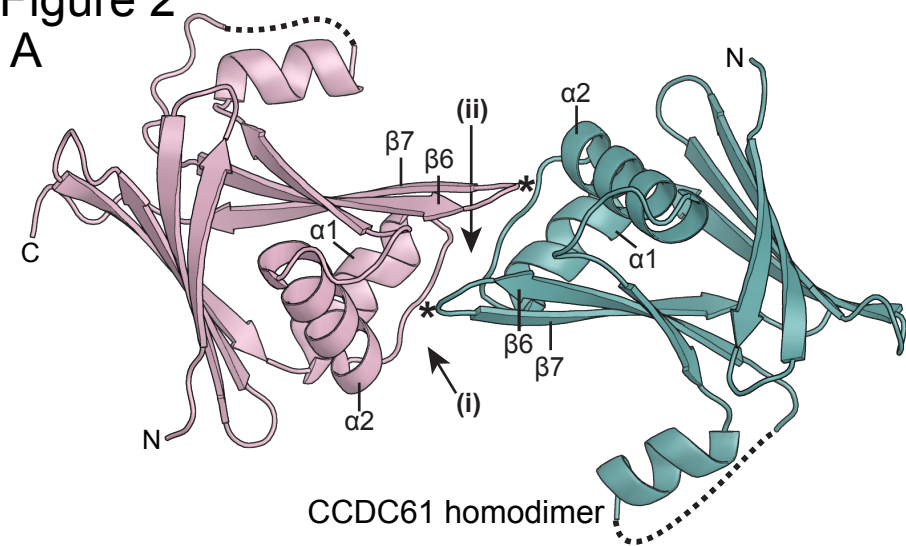
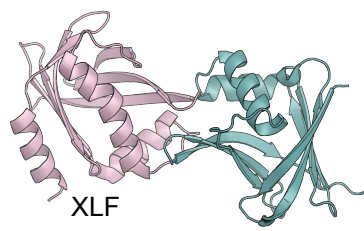


Figure 2**A**

SAS6 homodimer

XRCC4
XRCC4/XLF heterodimer**B**

Protein	Molecular weight (kDa)	
	Calculated (monomer)	Observed by AUC
hCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁴³	16.5	17.5 and 27.3
hCCDC61 ¹⁻¹⁴³ ; F128E/D129A	16.4	16.0

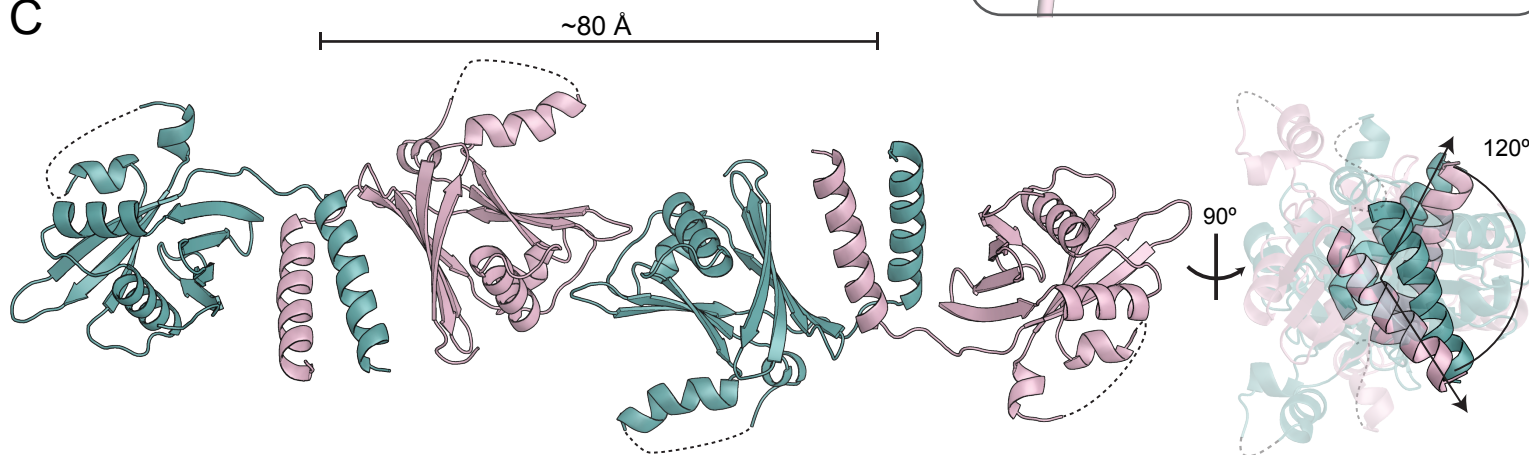
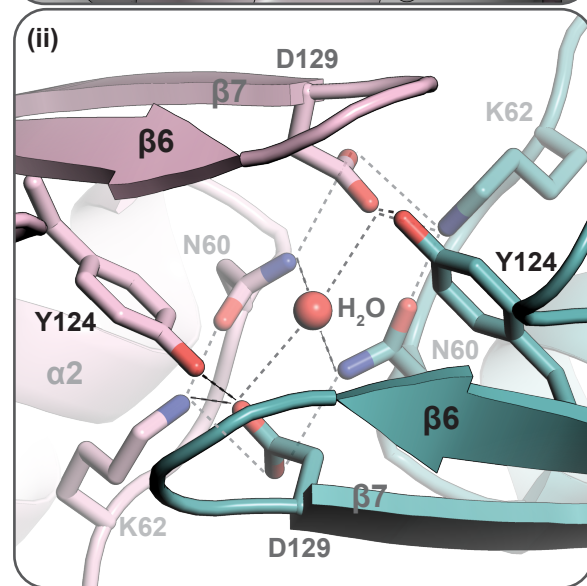
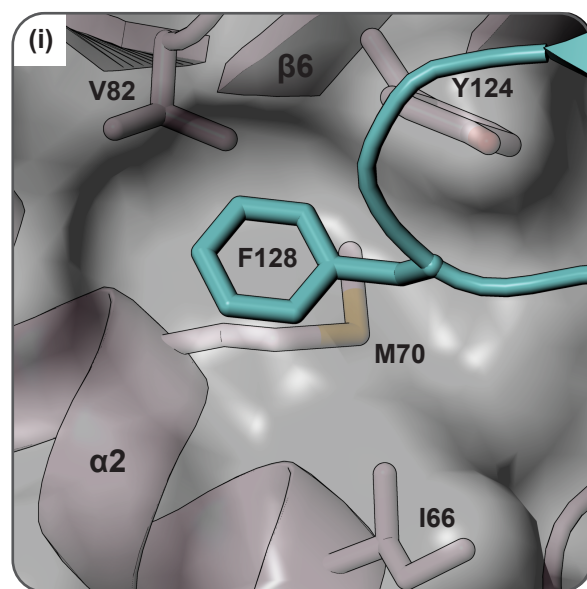
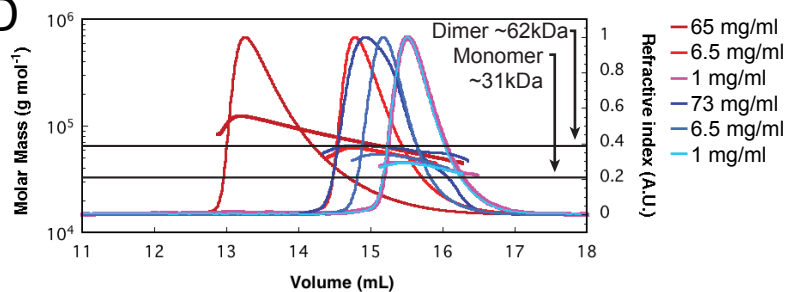
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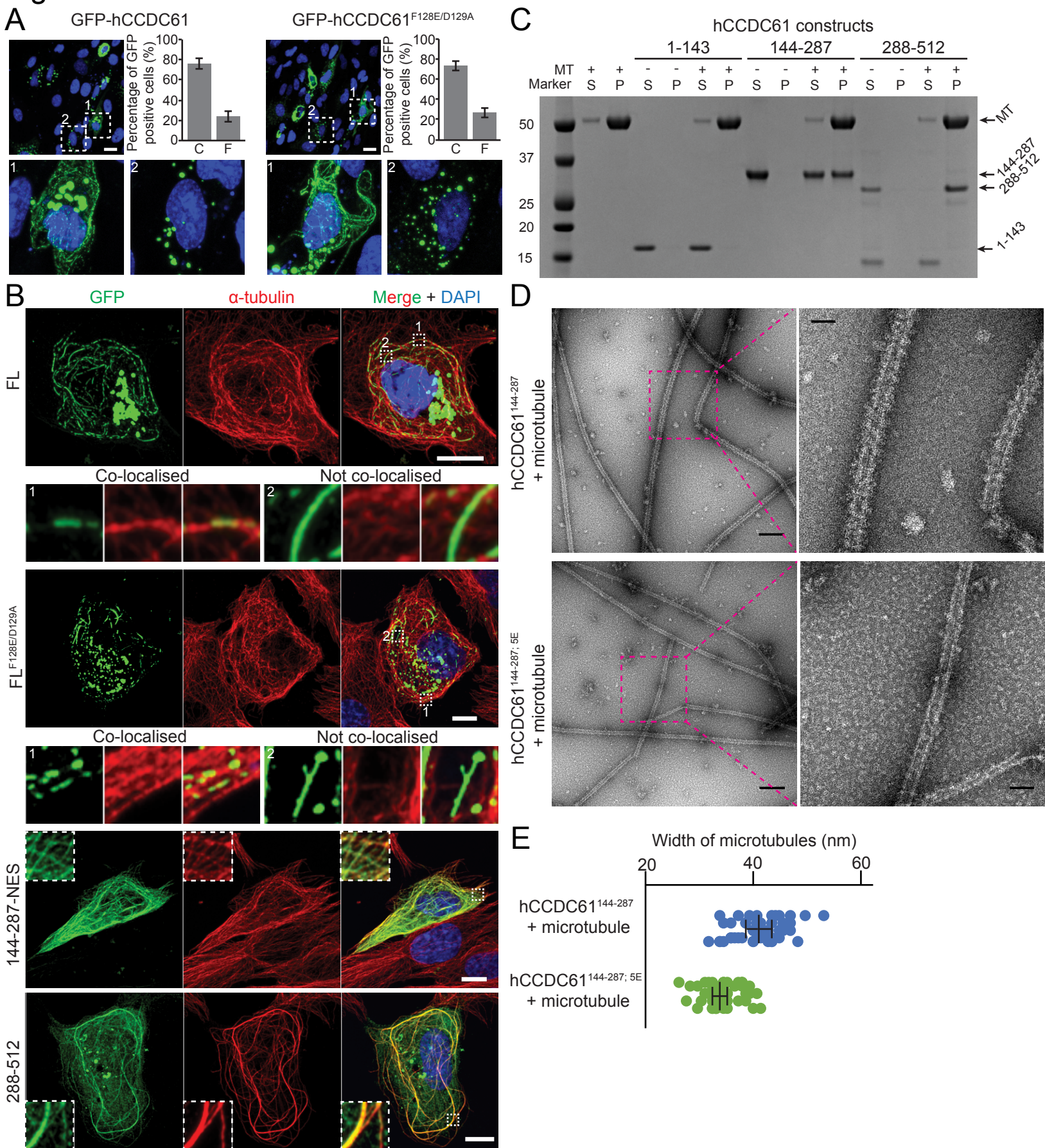
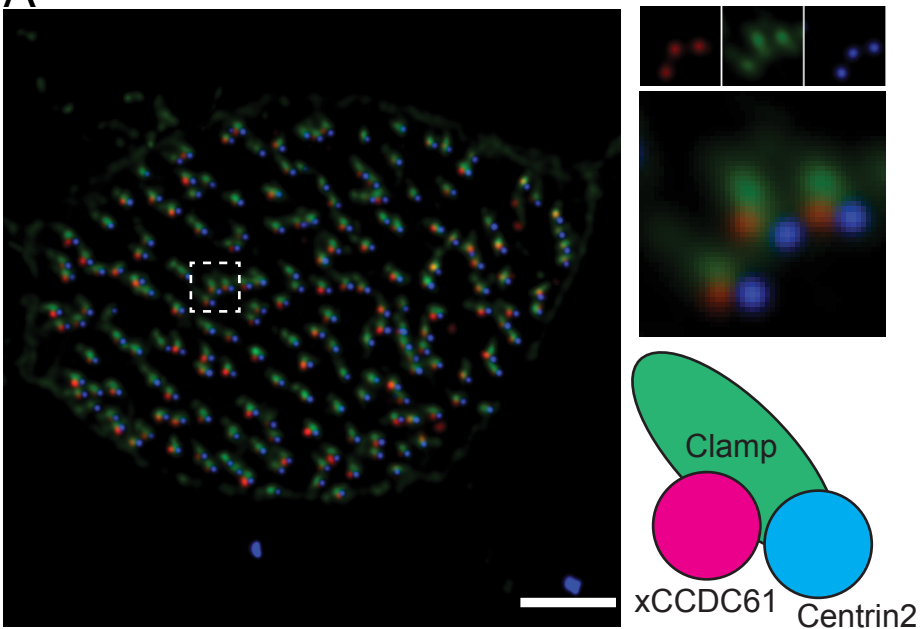
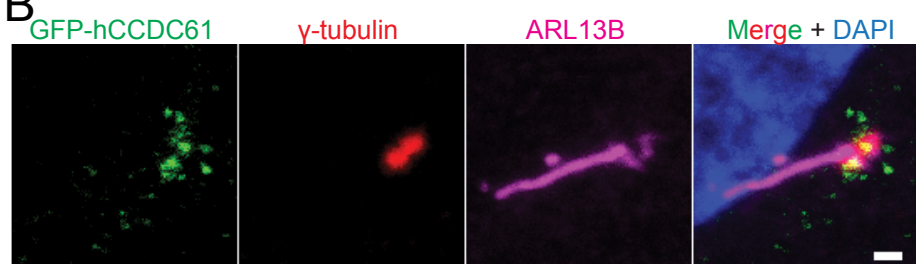
Figure 3

Figure 4

A



B



C

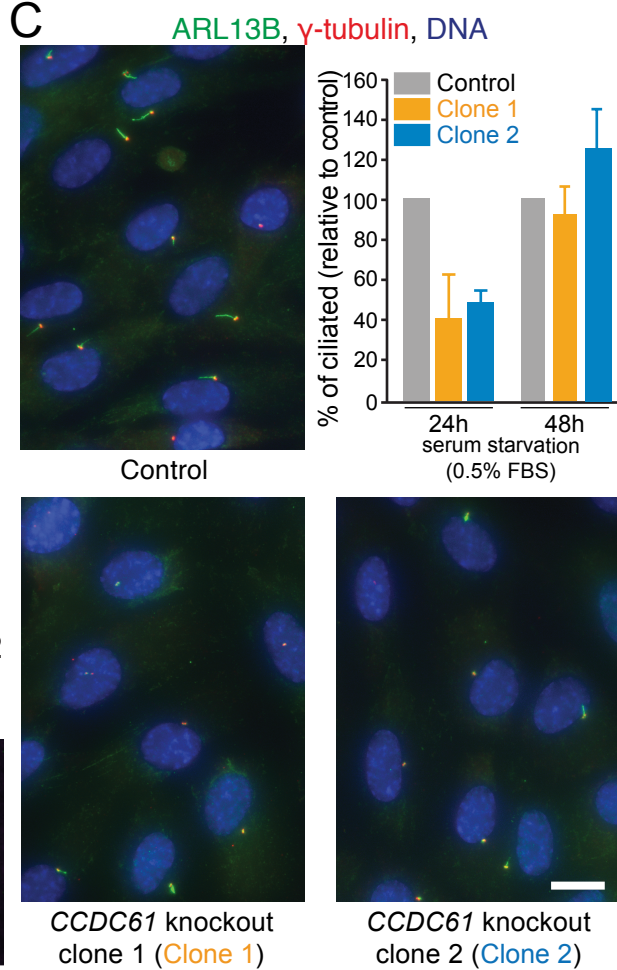
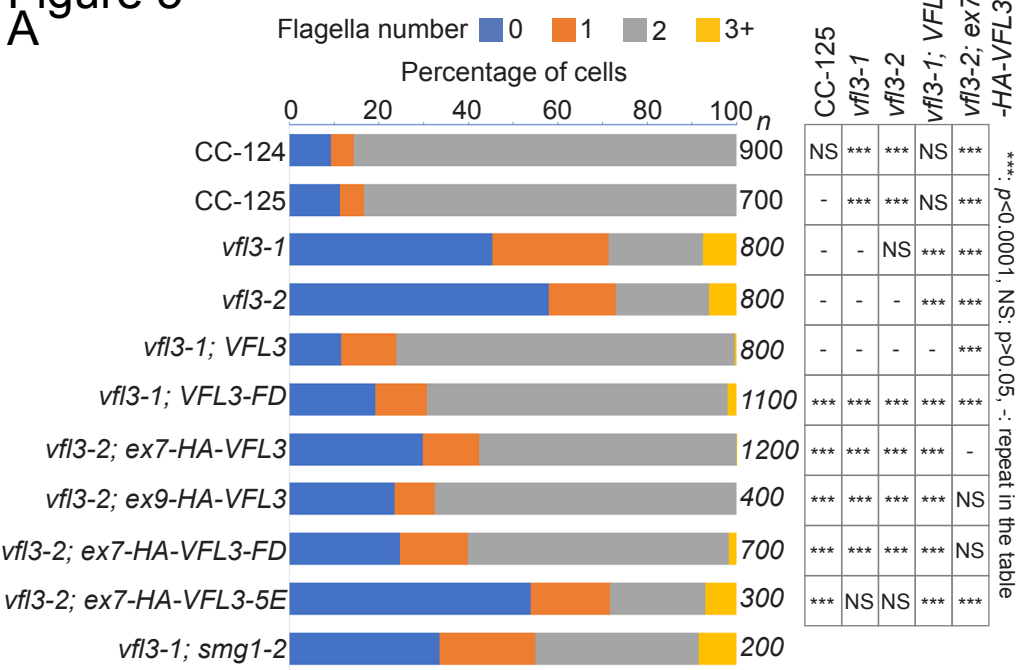
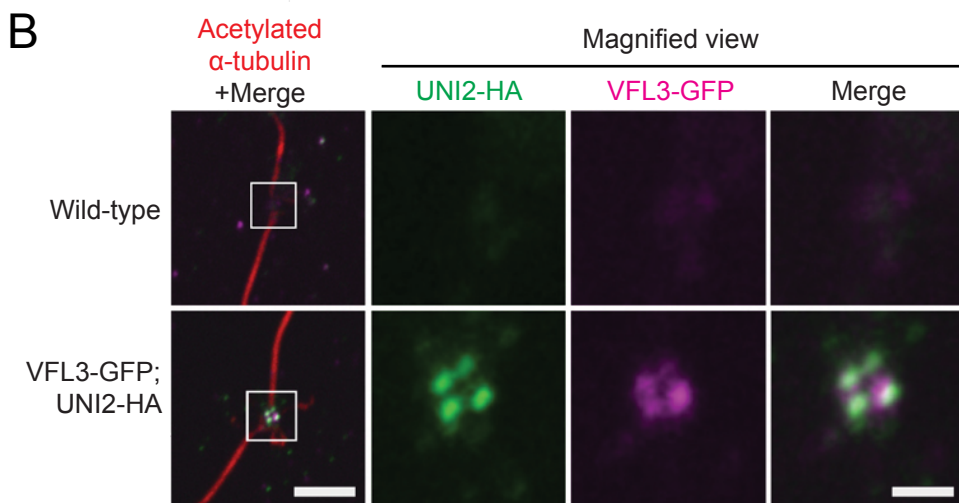


Figure 5

A



B



C

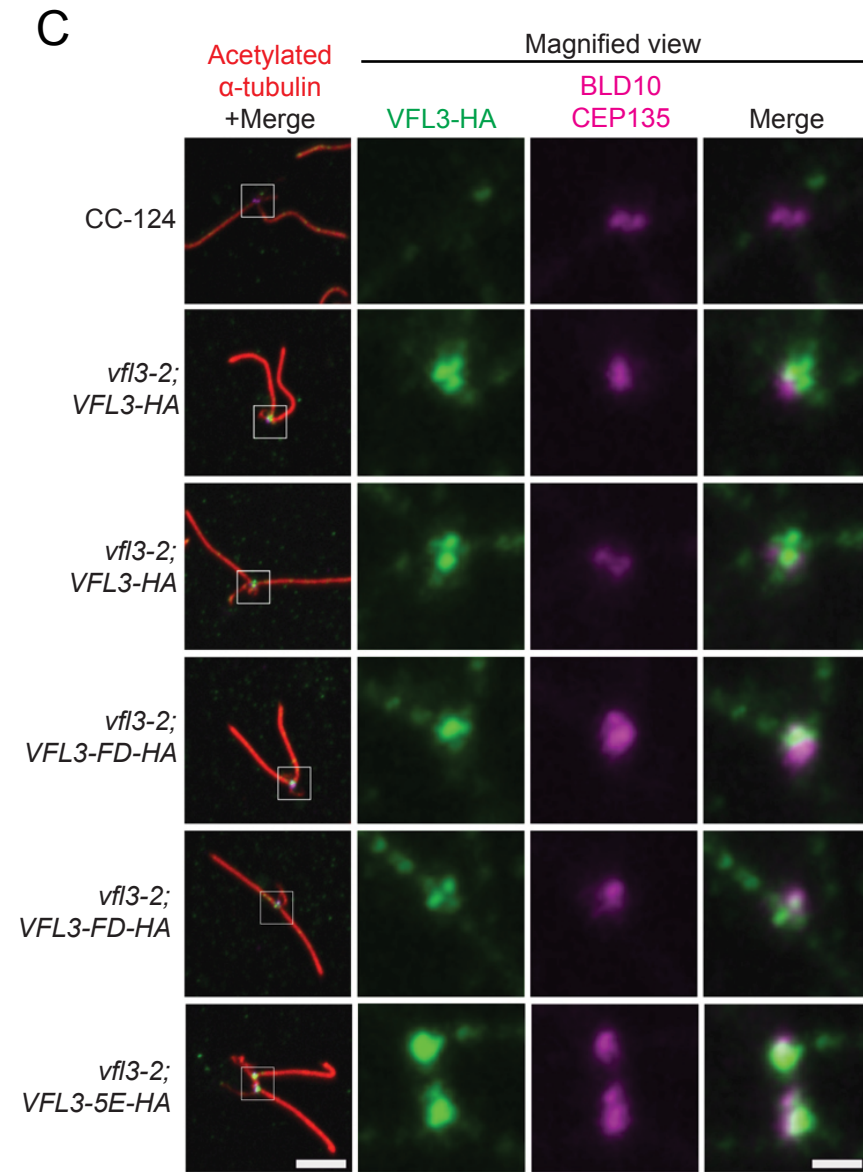
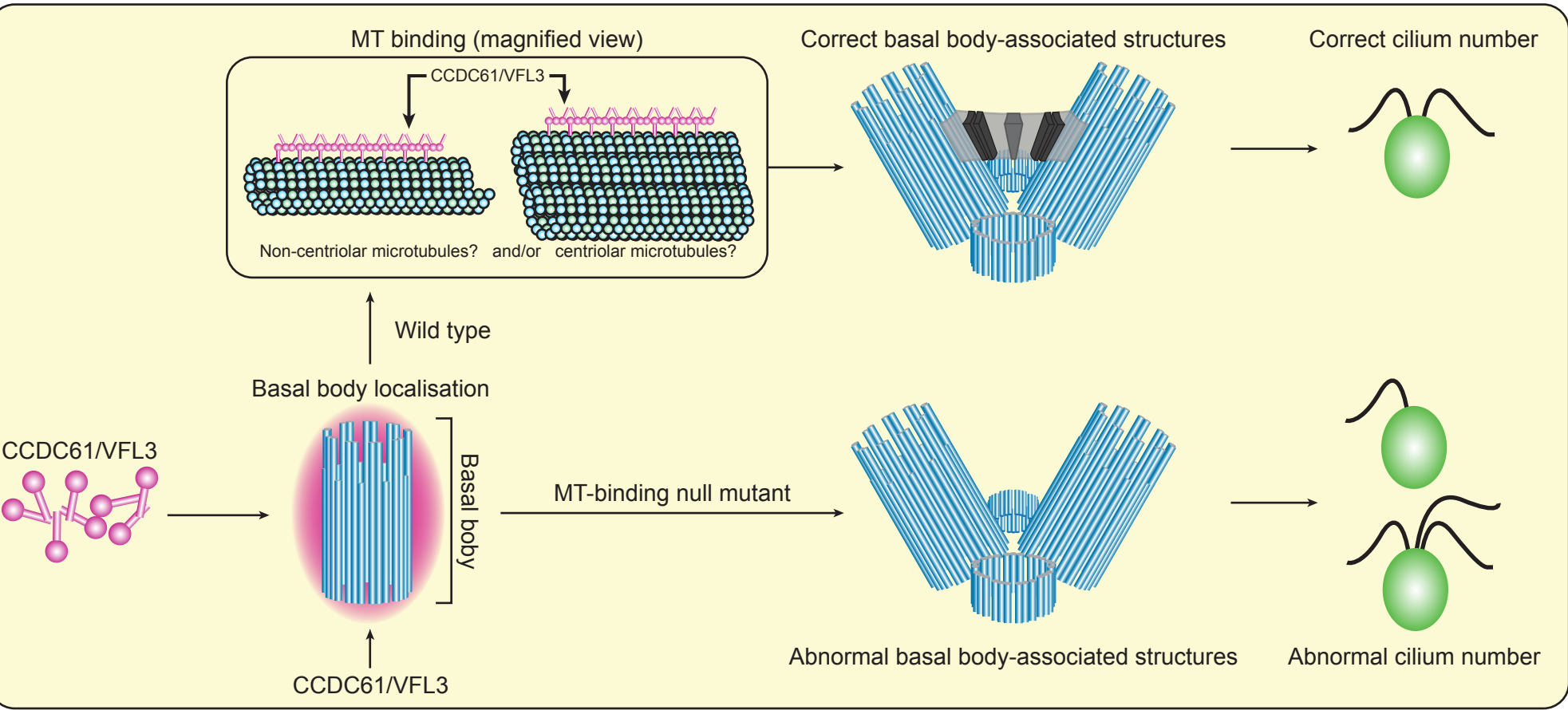


Figure 6



1 **Supplementary tables**

2 **Table S1. Related to Figure 1.** Accession numbers of selected CCDC61 orthologs.

Name of organism		Accession number
<i>Homo sapiens</i>	Human	NP_001254652.1
<i>Mus musculus</i>	Mouse	NP_001028486.1
<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Chicken	NP_001006546.1
<i>Xenopus laevis</i>	Frog	XP_018084688.1
<i>Danio rerio</i>	Zebrafish	NP_001070634.1
<i>Capitella teleta</i>	Worm	ELU17212.1
<i>Apis dorsata</i>	Bee	XP_006623417.1
<i>Pediculus humanus corporis</i>	Body louse	XP_002431146.1
<i>Nicrophorus vespilloides</i>	Beetle	XP_017778830.1
<i>Strongylocentrotus purpuratus</i>	Sea urchin	XP_011661626.1
<i>Schmidtea mediterranea</i>	Planaria	SMU15034611
<i>Amphimedon queenslandica</i>	Sponge	XP_019855245.1
<i>Salpingoeca rosetta</i>	Choanoflagellate	XP_004997494.1
<i>Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis JAM81</i>	Fungi	XP_006681050.1
<i>Paramecium tetraurelia strain d4-2</i>	Ciliate	XP_001428378.1
<i>Tetrahymena thermophila SB210</i>	Ciliate	XP_001015880.1
<i>Stylonychia lemnae</i>	Ciliate	CDW82093.1
<i>Thecamonas trahens ATCC 50062</i>	Flagellate	XP_013757734.1
<i>Selaginella moellendorffii</i>	Plant	EFJ09694.1
<i>Chlamydomonas reinhardtii</i>	Green algae	XP_001695308.1
<i>Phytophthora parasitica P1569</i>	Oomycete	ETI35441.1
<i>Trypanosoma cruzi strain CL Brener</i>	Parasite	XP_814690.1
<i>Giardia lamblia P15</i>	Parasite	EFO64425.1
<i>Trichomonas vaginalis G3</i>	Parasite	XP_001298262.1

3

4

1 **Table S2. Related to Figure 2, 3 and 4.** Primers used for site-directed mutagenesis of human and
2 zebrafish CCDC61 plasmids and human genomic DNA PCR.

Primers	Sequences
hCCDC61 ^{F128E/D129A} _F	TACAGTGTGGAAGAAGCTCGCATT CAT
hCCDC61 ^{F128E/D129A} _R	ATGAATGCGAGCTTCTTCCACACTGTA
hCCDC61 ^{E5} _F	GAAGCGAGCGAAGAGAGCCTGGAAGCCGAGCTGGAAACCCTGACGAGCGAAC TGGCA
hCCDC61 ^{E5} _R	TTCCAGCTCGGCTTCCAGGCTCTCTTCGCTCGCTTCCGCTTCTTCCAGTTCTTTA GCCA
zCCDC61 ^{F129E/D130A} _F	CACGGTGGAGGAAGCTAGGATACATTA
zCCDC61 ^{F129E/D130A} _R	TAATGTATCCTAGCTTCCTCCACCGTG
zCCDC61 ^{E5} _F	GAAGCCTCCGAAGAGGCTCTTGAAATAGAGGTTGAAAGTCTGACCACTGAGTTG GCC
zCCDC61 ^{E5} _R	TTCAACCTCTATTTCAAGAGCCTCTTCGGAGGCTTCAAGTTCCTCTAACTGTTCC ACCAG
Human genomic DNA PCR forward	TTCCAGGGTTCCATGGGTCTAGGTTTCTCTCATCTCCTT
Human genomic DNA PCR reverse	CGAGGTCGACGAATTCGGCACACTCACAGCCAGCATCGAA

3

4

1 **Table S3. Related to Figure 5.** Primers used to construct *Chlamydomonas* VFL3 plasmids.

Primers	Sequences
VFL3-1F	GCTGTGCTGGCAGGCTGAAC
VFL3-7R	TGCCCCAAAGGCCCAAATGTC
VFL3-NotI-F	CATGCTCGAGCGGCCGCTCGGTCCGATTGGTGCTATG
VFL3-NdeI-R	TCACAGTCTCGCATATGTCGCCCATTTCCTTCACGC
VFL3-13F-AflII	TCAAGAAGTTCCCCGTGTTCTGTC
VFL3-13R-HpaI	CGACAACGGAGTTAACAGAGGCACGGGACGTCCCC
VFL3-14F-HpaI	CCGTGCCTCTGTAACTCCGTTGTCGGTAAGCTTGTAGCC
VFL3-14R-SalI	CGCTCGCTGGCCGACTC
exon7-HpaI-HA-F	TCCCGTGCCTCTGTTGGCCGCATCTTTTACCCATACG
exon7-HpaI-HA-R	ACCGACAACGGAGTTGCACTGAGCAGCGTAATCTGG
VFL3-7F	TGCTCAGCCGGTTCCTCTTC
VFL3-15R-HpaI	GCATGCATCAGTTAACCGCCTGTGTCGTGCTGGTG
VFL3-15F-HpaI	GACACAGGCGGTAACTGATGCATGCATGTAGCGGG
VFL3-3R	CACAGATGCACGGTGCCAGA
exon9-HpaI-HA-F	ACGACACAGGCGGTTGGCCGCATCTTTTACCCATACG
exon9-HpaI-HA-R	ATGCATGCATCAGTTGCACTGAGCAGCGTAATCTGG
VFL3-F126D127-F	CTGAGGAGGCCCGCGTGCACTACCCGCTA
VFL3-5R	AGTCCTCCGTCAGCTGCCGT
VFL3-8F	GTGGAGGTGGAGCAGAAAGTC
VFL3-F126D127-R	CGCGGGCCTCCTCAGCGGCATAGGTCATAATGAGG
VFL3-5E-F	TCGAGGAGCTCGAGATGGAGATAGAGCAGCTGACGGAGGACTTAGAGGC
VFL3-6R	CCACCACCCGGGAACCTTTGA
VFL3-2F	ACCCGCTACCGCTGCTGTTC
VFL3-5E-R	TCTCGAGCTCCTCGATTTGCTCCTCGCAGCGACCCAGCTCGTCC

Supplemental figure legends

Figure S1. Related to Figure 1. Identification of CCDC61 as an XRCC4 superfamily member and sequence alignment of its orthologs. (A) A schematic flow chart of the computational approach used to identify CCDC61 as an XRCC4-superfamily member. (B) Sequence alignment of CCDC61 orthologs from *Homo sapiens*, *Xenopus laevis*, *Danio rerio*, *Schmidtea mediterranea*, *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* and *Paramecium tetraurelia*. The alignment was generated using the BOXSHADE server. α -helices and β -strands observed in our crystal structures are highlighted with pink and green respectively, and are labelled on top of the alignment. Predicted helices are highlighted with blue boxes. Residue numbers are found next to the corresponding species names. Dark and light blue and red arrows point to residues in the head and coiled-coil domain, respectively, that were mutated in this study to address their functional role in CCDC61. The green arrow points to the position of the nonsense mutation K497X in the CCDC61 ortholog VFL3 in *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii* strain *vfl3-1*.

Figure S2. Related to Figure 2. The N-terminal head domain of CCDC61 homodimerizes in solution. (A) The two head domain interactions of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ observed in the asymmetric unit of the corresponding protein crystal. These two different packing interactions of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ are shown in the rectangular boxes labelled D1 and D2. The protein chain common between D1 and D2 is represented using the Consurf (Glaser et al., 2003) conservation colour code as defined in the right bottom of the D1 box. (B) Detailed view of the β -zipper found in the head-to-head homodimer interface of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ (dimer D1). The location of the β -zipper is indicated by a black rectangle in the overview of the head-to-head homodimer shown on the left. Subunit colouring as in Figure 2A. Hydrogen bonds are represented by dotted lines. (C) AUC sedimentation velocity analysis of hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ and hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³; F128E/D129A in solution. Upper panels show Rayleigh interference profiles with best fits of a c(s) model (coloured lines) and their residuals to the fits underneath. The different colors represent scans at different times: blue is the

1 earliest time points where very little material has sedimented; through to red where all the material
 2 has sedimented and the signal is near baseline across the radius. For clarity, only every 3rd scan
 3 and 7th data point is displayed. The lower panels show the c(s) distribution of species. The wild-
 4 type protein had two main sedimenting species: the species at 1.27 S ($S_{w,20} = 2.02$ S) had a
 5 calculated mass of approx. 17.5 kDa with frictional ratio (f/f_o) = 1.20, close to that expected for a
 6 monomer (16.5 kDa); and a species at 1.70 S ($S_{w,20} = 2.71$ S) with a calculated mass of 27.3 kDa
 7 close to the mass expected for a dimer (33 kDa). hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³; F128E/D129A had only one main
 8 sedimenting species at 1.15 S ($S_{w,20} = 1.83$ S) with a corresponding mass of approx. 16 kDa with
 9 $f/f_o = 1.245$. This is close to the mass expected for a monomer (16.4 kDa). (D) Analysis of an AUC
 10 equilibrium sedimentation experiment with wild-type protein in three different concentrations (1.3, 4
 11 and 12 mg/ml) at 11,600 (dark blue), 19,700 (light blue) and 34,000 rpm (maroon). For clarity only
 12 every 6th data point is displayed. The data revealed average molecular masses from 22-33 kDa
 13 consistent with a monomer-dimer equilibrium. Fitting such a model to the data gave a global value
 14 for the dimerisation dissociation constant $K_d = 170 \pm 18$ μ M. (E) 2D ¹H, ¹⁵N BEST-Trosy spectra of
 15 ¹⁵N-labelled human SAS6¹⁻¹⁴³ alone (black) or mixed with unlabelled hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ (red). No
 16 significant chemical shift perturbation of ¹⁵N-labelled human SAS6¹⁻¹⁴³ was observed in the
 17 presence of unlabelled hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³, arguing against an interaction between these two proteins.

18
 19 **Figure S3. Related to Figure 2.** Comparison of XRCC4 superfamily proteins. (A) Structural
 20 comparison of zCCDC61 (pink; Figure 2C), *L. major* SAS6 (cyan); PDB code: 4CKP (van Breugel
 21 et al., 2014)), *C. elegans* SAS6 (sky blue; PDB code: 3PYI (Hilbert et al., 2013)) and *H. sapiens*
 22 XRCC4/XLF (yellow and grey respectively; PDB code: 3W03 (Wu et al., 2011);). (B) Superposition
 23 of the head domains of zCCDC61 (pink), *L. major* SAS6 structures (cyan), *C. elegans* SAS6 (sky
 24 blue) and *H. sapiens* XRCC4/XLF (yellow and grey respectively). Both the relative head-to-head
 25 dimer orientations and the head-domain – coiled-coil domain orientation differ between these
 26 structures, explaining the different oligomeric assemblies formed by them. The relative orientations

of the head-to-head dimers were measured using C α atoms of a conserved hydrophobic residue indicated by the red arrowhead in Figure S7A.

Figure S4. Related to Figure 3. CCDC61 binds microtubules. (A) Transiently over-expressed hCCDC61 colocalises with microtubules in cells. Immunofluorescent images of RPE-1 cells expressing the indicated GFP-hCCDC61 constructs and stained against GFP and α -tubulin. Scale bars are 10 μ m. (B) Microtubule-stabilizing and -destabilizing agents do not affect the proportion of cells containing CCDC61 filaments. Immunofluorescent images of RPE-1 cells expressing GFP-hCCDC61 that were treated with DMSO (control), 5 μ M Taxol (Taxol) or 5 μ g/ml nocodazole (Noco.) for 3 hours. The regions indicated by white rectangles (1: CCDC61 containing, 2: largely devoid of CCDC61) are shown magnified in the second and third columns. α -tubulin staining of the regions devoid of CCDC61 indicated that in these regions Taxol-treated cells tend to have thicker microtubule bundles whereas nocodazole-treated cells have a more dispersed α -tubulin staining there. Scale bars, 20 μ m. Bar graphs show the ratios of cluster-only versus filament-containing RPE-1 cells expressing GFP-hCCDC61 observed under the experimental conditions (DMSO ($n=169$), Taxol ($n=240$), nocodazole ($n=253$)). Error bars are standard deviations calculated from three biological replicates. (C) CCDC61 filaments are retained in the presence of nocodazole. Live cell imaging of a control RPE-1 cell after addition of 0.1%(v/v) DMSO and three RPE-1 cells (cell 1: upper panel, cell 2: lower panel with white arrowheads and cell 3: lower panel with white arrows) containing GFP-hCCDC61 filaments after addition of 5 μ g/ml nocodazole. Scale bar, 10 μ m. (D) Conserved positively charged residues in α 7 are essential for microtubule binding by hCCDC61. Coomassie stained SDS-PAGE gel showing a co-pelleting assay with Taxol-stabilized microtubules and the 5E mutant of the coiled-coil domain of hCCDC61. S, supernatant, P, pellet. (E) Western blot showing the results of a GFP-pulldown from tissue culture cell extracts of HEK293T cells transiently overexpressing GFP- or 3xHA-tagged hCCDC61 mutants. Shown is the ponceau stained blot (top) as well as the blot staining with an anti-HA antibody (bottom). (F) Circular dichroism (CD) spectra of zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰ (black) and its 5E mutant (red). The figure

1 shows CD spectra at 5 °C (left) and melting curves of these constructs as observed at 222 nm at
2 increasing temperatures (right). (G) Removal of the C-termini of tubulins in microtubules by
3 subtilisin. 2 mg/ml Taxol-stabilised microtubules “C” were incubated with a four-fold dilution series
4 of subtilisin. The highest used concentration of subtilisin was 2 mg/ml. Reactions were stopped by
5 PMSF addition and parts of these reactions were separated by SDS-PAGE followed by Coomassie
6 Blue staining. The corresponding gel is shown here. The remainder of the reaction marked by a
7 black arrow was subsequently used for the co-pelleting assay shown in (H), in the panel beneath.
8 (H) The C-terminal tails of tubulins are required for CCDC61 binding to microtubules. Coomassie
9 stained SDS-PAGE gel showing a co-pelleting assay of the coiled-coil domain of hCCDC61 with
10 either untreated Taxol-stabilized microtubules (MT) or subtilisin-treated Taxol-stabilized
11 microtubules that lack the C-terminal tails of tubulin (MT^{ΔC}, see (G)). S, supernatant, P, pellet. (I)
12 Immunofluorescent images of RPE-1 cells overexpressing GFP-hCCDC61^{5E} and stained against
13 GFP and α-tubulin. We examined a total of 101 cells from three biological replicates but did not
14 observe any filament formation by GFP-hCCDC61^{5E}. Scale bar is 20 μm.

15
16 **Figure S5. Related to Figure 4.** CCDC61 does not play a major role in cell division but has a
17 function in ciliogenesis. (A) CRISPR-Cas9 knockout strategy and results of *CCDC61* knock-out in
18 RPE-1 cells. Inserts (pink) and premature-stop codon positions (pink arrows) are indicated in a
19 schematic diagram of the genomic locus of *CCDC61*. An agarose gel image shows genomic PCR
20 results of two-independent *CCDC61* knockout RPE-1 cells. (B) FACS profiles of control and two
21 *CCDC61*-knockout RPE-1 cells. The colour scheme of the FACS profile of each cell is as follows:
22 experimental data, which are cell count x Hoechst-area, (black), diploid in G0/G1 (red “\”), diploid in
23 S (red “|”), diploid in G2/M (red “/”) and fitted curve (green). Bar graphs show quantification of the
24 numbers of cells in G1, S and G2/M cells from three biological replicates. Error bars are standard
25 deviations. (C) Centrosome numbers of control and *CCDC61* knockout RPE-1 cells. The numbers
26 of centrioles of monastrol treated RPE-1 cells were counted by immunostaining with Centrin-3. 30
27 mitotic cells were counted per cell line from one sample per cell type. (D) Proliferation profiles of

control and the *CCDC61*-knockout RPE-1 cells. Data correspond to three biological replicates. Error bars are standard deviations. (E) Reduction of ciliated cells upon knockdown of *CCDC61* in RPE-1 cells. The top bar graphs show knockdown efficiencies of cell only (Cells), transfection-reagent only (RNAiMAX), control siRNA (CT siRNA) and three different siRNAs against *CCDC61* (siRNA 1,2 and 3), assessed by RT-PCR and calculated from three biological replicates. The bottom bar graphs show ciliogenesis efficiencies of these control and *CCDC61* knockdown RPE-1 cells. Data correspond to three biological replicates (total cell counts $n=1130, 1157, 717, 738, 715$ and 565 for Cells, RNAiMAX, CT siRNA, siRNA 1, siRNA 2 and siRNA 3 respectively). Percentages are relative to CT siRNA-treated cells. Bar graphs show mean \pm standard deviation. Representative immunofluorescent images used for the quantification of the ciliogenesis efficiencies are shown on the right. Scale bar is $10\ \mu\text{m}$.

Figure S6. Related to Figure 5. Rescue of *Chlamydomonas vfl3* strains. (A) Abnormal striated fibers in *vfl3* strains. Staining of striated fibers in the wild-type, *vfl3-1* and *vfl3-2* mutants, and the rescued *vfl3-2* strains. Striated fibers are indicated by staining of centrin (green) and cilia are indicated by staining of acetylated α -tubulin (red). Scale bar is $4\ \mu\text{m}$. (B) Expression of mRNA of *VFL3* in the wild-type strain, *vfl3* strains and the strains expressing *VFL3* constructs. *CNK10* was used for control. (C) Five independent transformants carrying the 3x HA tag in exon 7 of *VFL3*. Molecular weights are indicated on the right. (D) Transformants carrying wild-type, 5E-, and FD-*VFL3* all express the *VFL3* protein. Molecular weights are indicated on the right.

Figure S7. Related to Figure 1 Comparison of the XRCC4 superfamily members. (A) Structure-guided sequence alignment of the XRCC4 superfamily members. A conserved motif is indicated by a red-dotted rectangle. The red arrowhead indicates the conserved hydrophobic residue whose $\text{C}\alpha$ atoms were used to measure the relative orientations of the head-to-head dimers in Figure S3B. (B) Amino-acid sequence identities between the XRCC4 superfamily members as observed in their N-terminal head domains. The alignment shown in (A) was used to calculate sequence identities

1 using the SIAS server (<http://imed.med.ucm.es/Tools/sias.html>). Shown below these values are the
2 R.M.S.D. values of superpositions of the corresponding N-terminal head domain structures. (C) A
3 hypothetical CCDC61 filament bundle. Two linear zCCDC61 filaments (surface representation in
4 cyan and pink) were superimposed onto the CCDC61 D2 dimer (Figure S2A) found in the
5 asymmetric unit of the hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³ crystal (cartoon representation). The two dimers D1 (red and
6 blue) and D2 (red and green) are indicated by black arrows. (D) Coomassie stained SDS-PAGE
7 gels showing the purified hCCDC61¹⁻¹⁴³, hCCDC61^{1-143; F128E/D129A}, zCCDC61^{1-168; F129E/D130A}, His₆-
8 lypoyl-zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰, His₆-lypoyl-zCCDC61^{1-170; F129E/D130A}, zCCDC61¹⁻¹⁷⁰, zCCDC61¹⁴⁶⁻²⁸⁰,
9 zCCDC61^{146-280; 5E} and hSAS6¹⁻¹⁴³ used for AUC, CD, crystallography, NMR and SEC-MALS
10 experiments.

A

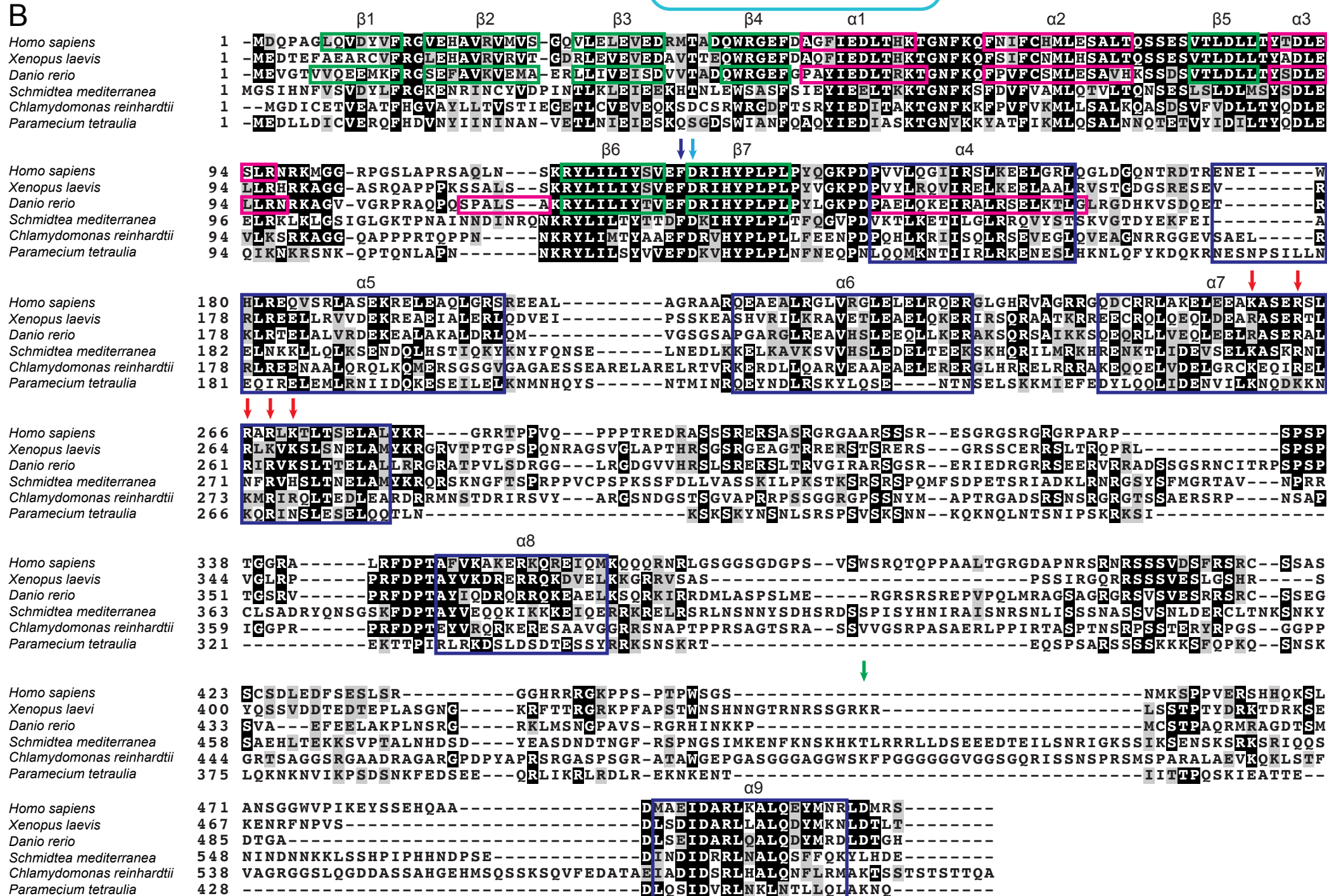
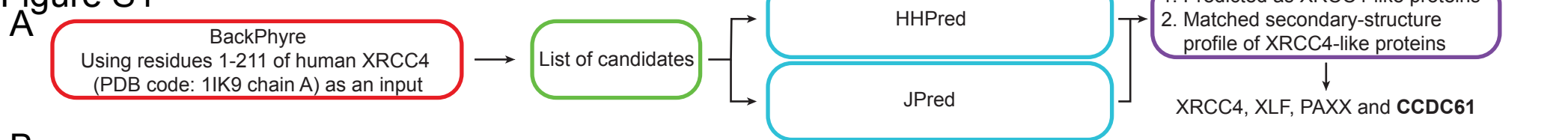


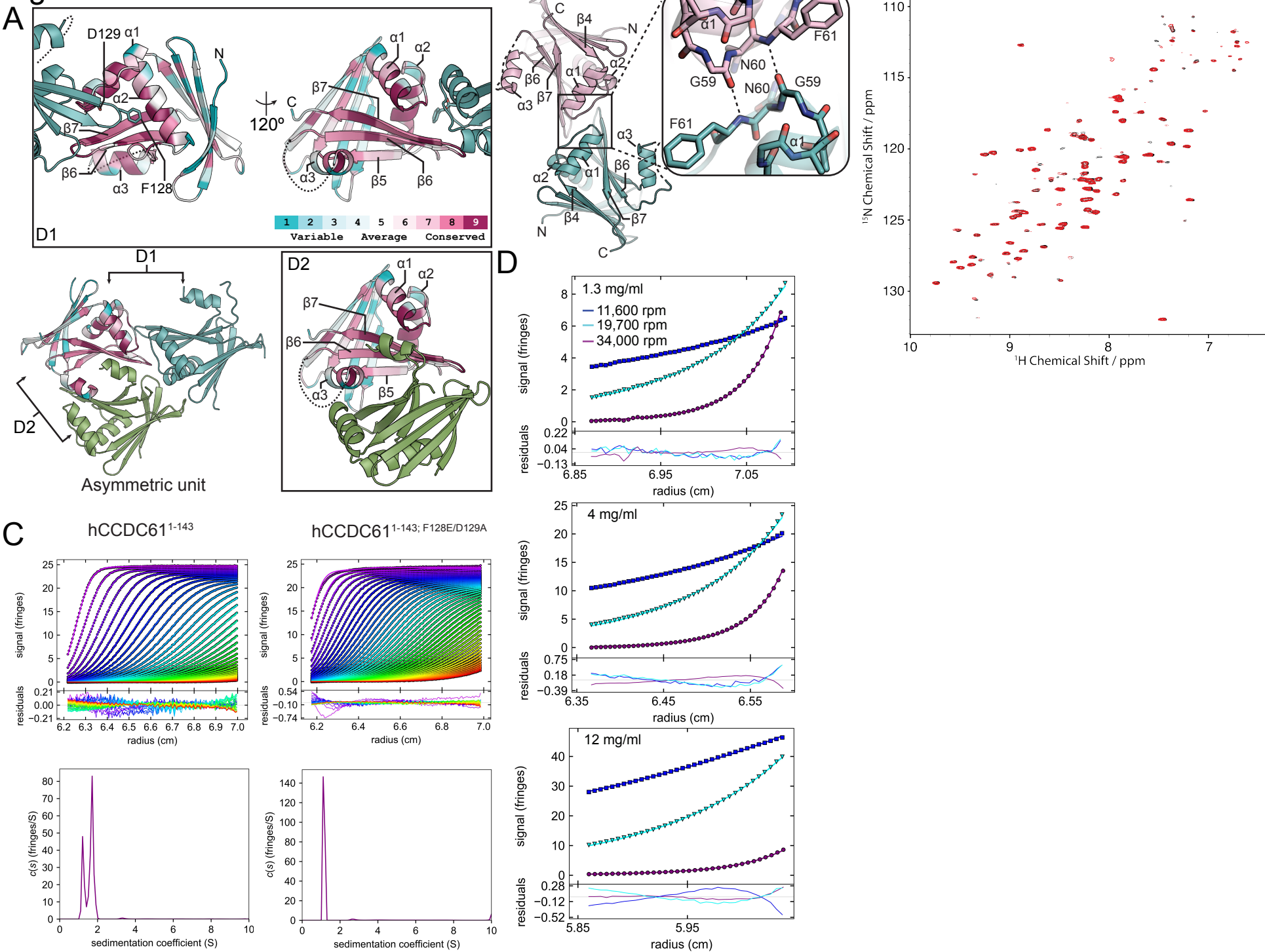
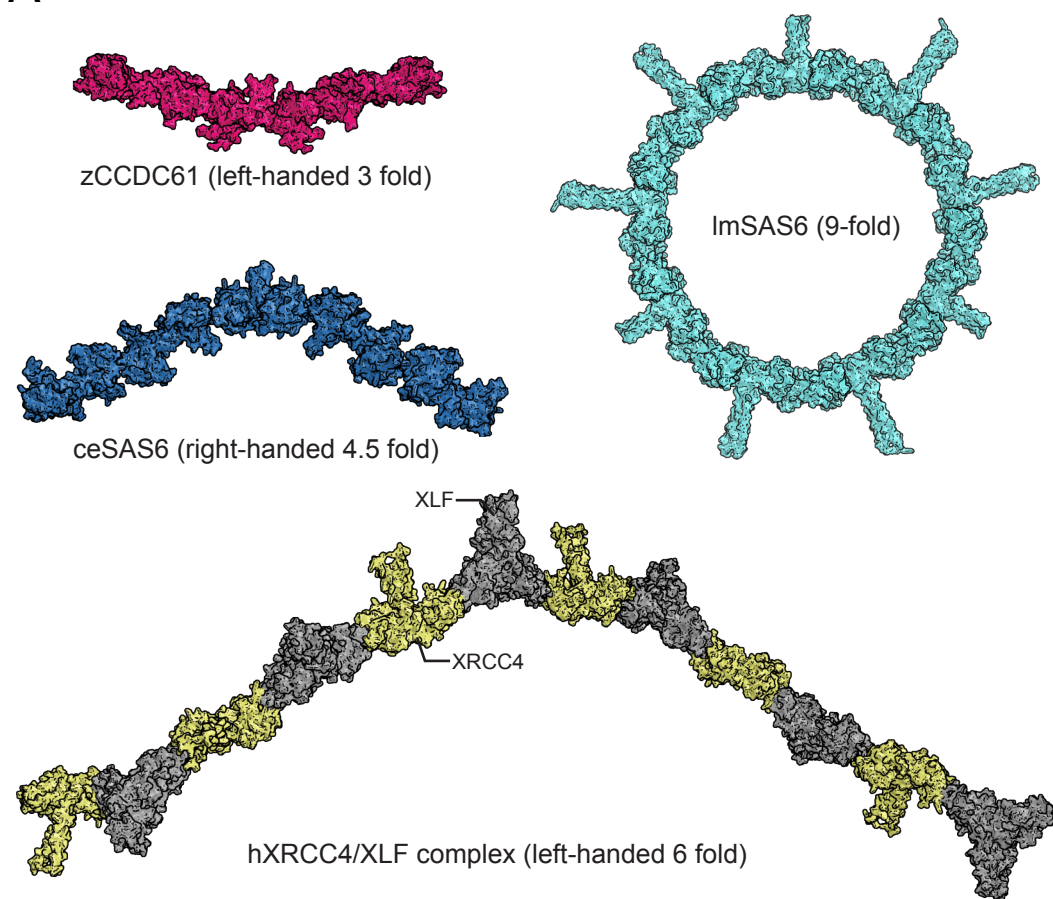
Figure S2

Figure S3

A



B

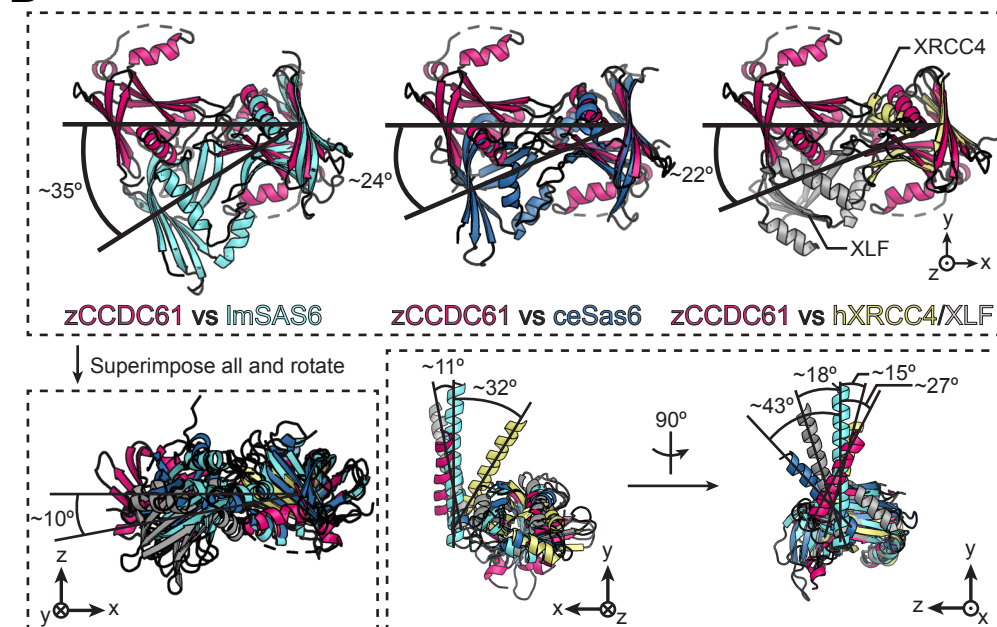


Figure S4

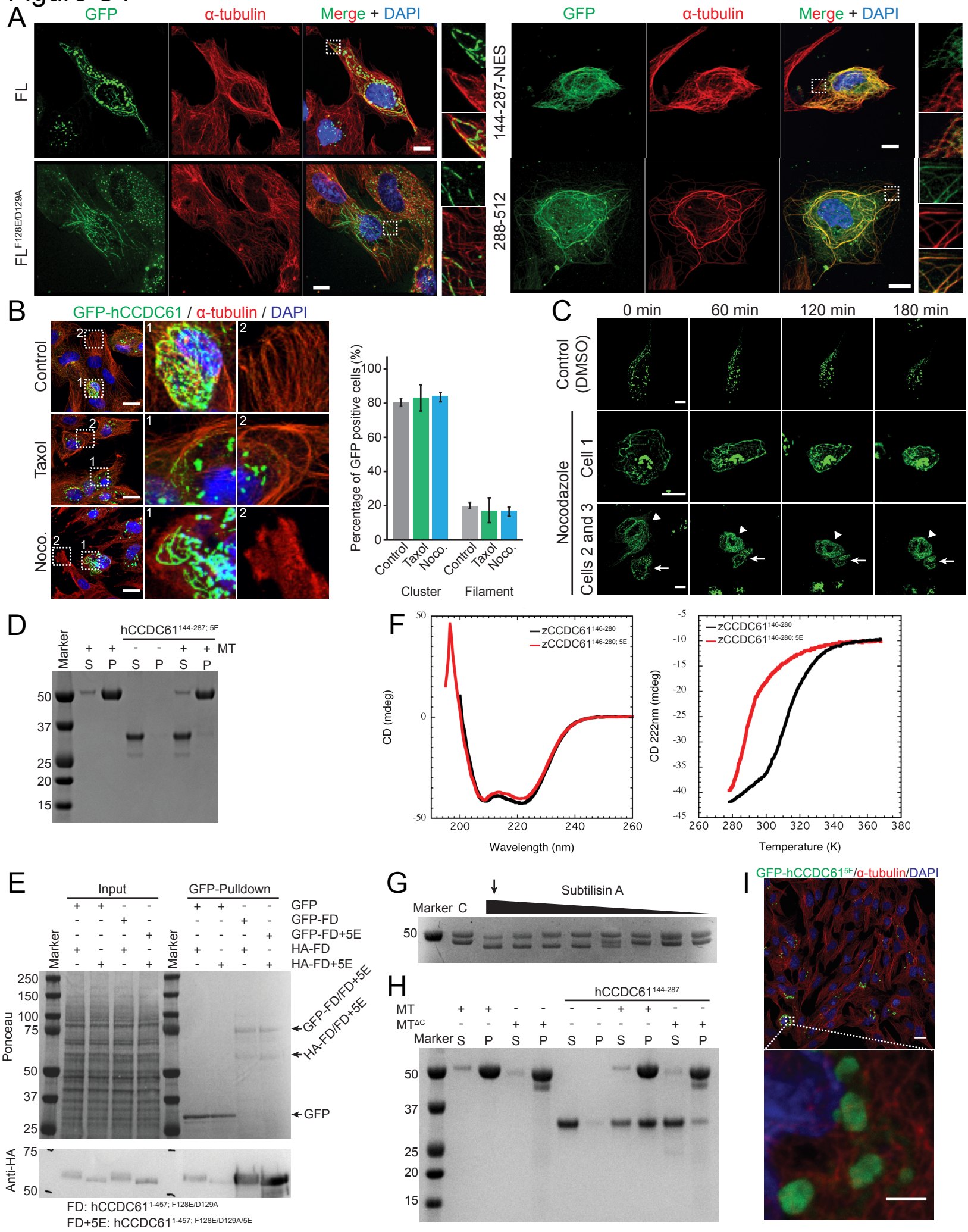


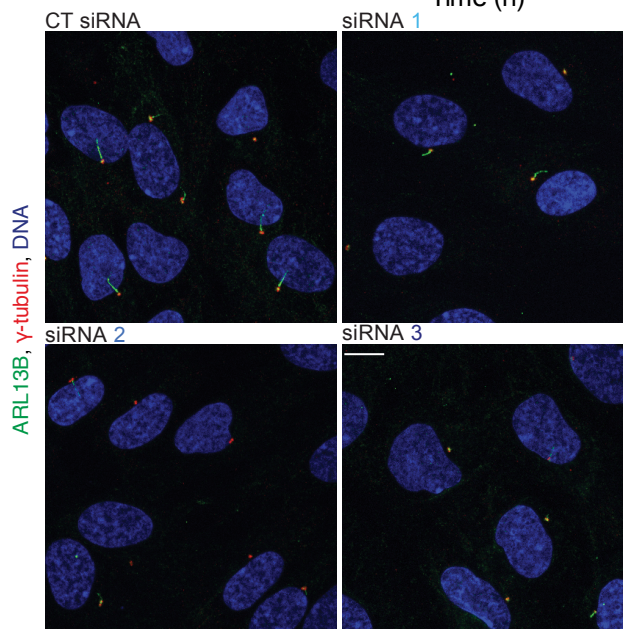
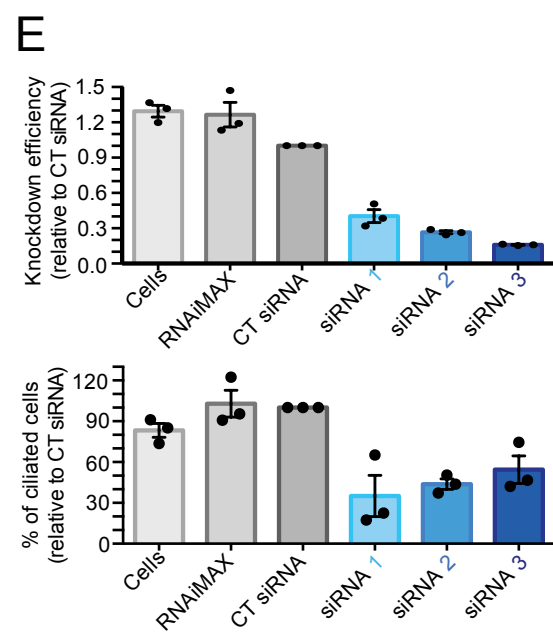
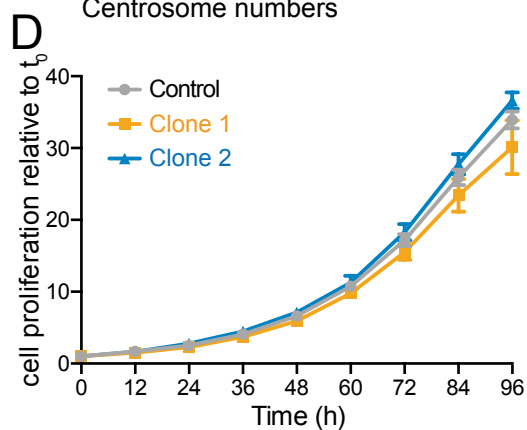
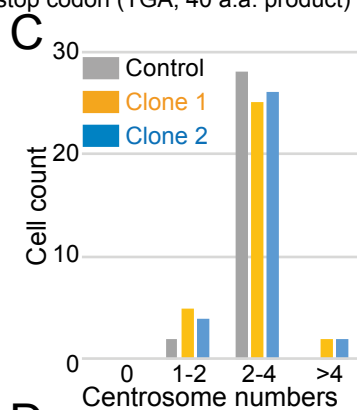
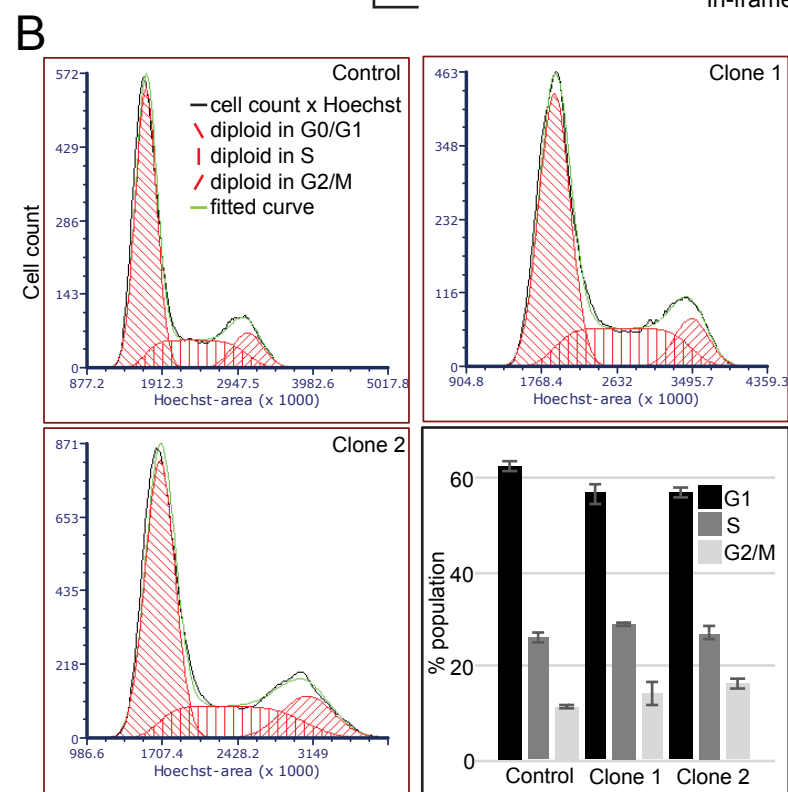
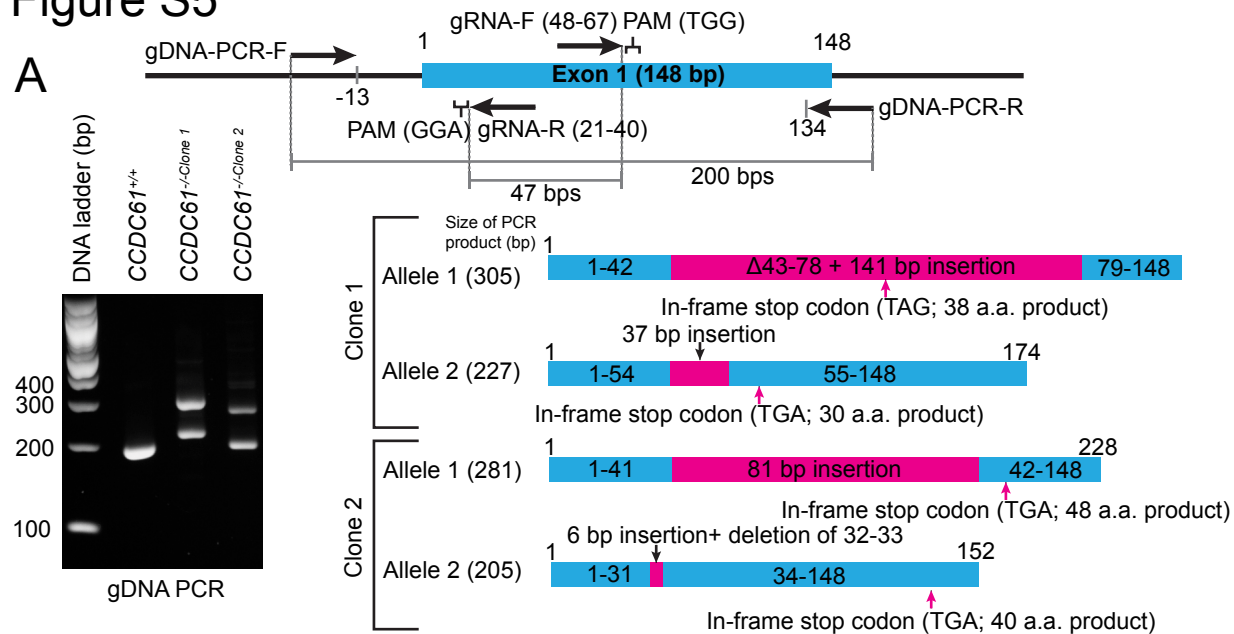
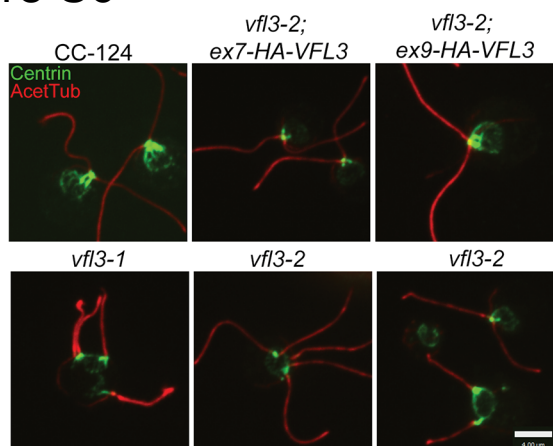
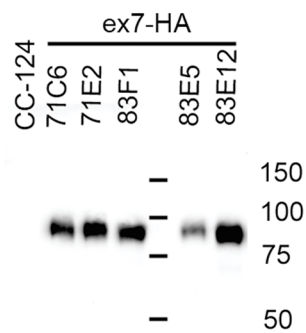
Figure S5

Figure S6

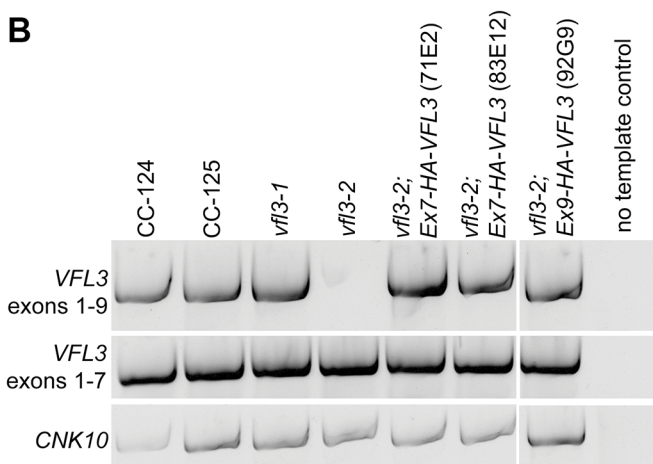
A



C



B



D

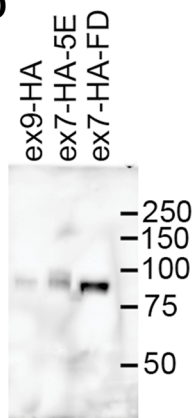


Figure S7

A

```
hCCDC61 1 -----MDQPAGLQVDYVFR-----GVEHAVRVMVSG-----QVLEFEVEDRMT-ADQWRGEFDAGFIEDLTHKTGN--FKQFNI
hSAS6 1 -----MSQVLFHQLVPIQVKCKDCEERRVSIIRMSIELQSVSNPVHRKDLVIRLTDDTDPFFLYNLVISEEDFQSLKFQOGL--LVDFLA
hXRCC4 1 -----MERKISRIRHIV-----SEPSITHFLQVSWEK-----TLESGFVITLTDG---HSAWTGTVSESEISQEADDMM---EKGK
hXLF 1 MEELEQGGLMOPWAWLQI-----AENSLLAKVFITK-----QGYALLVSDL---QQVWHEQVDTSVVSORAKELNKRLTAPPAA
hPAXX 1 -----MDPLSPPLCTLPP-----GPEPPRFVCYCEGEE-SGEGDRGCFNLVVTDA---AELWSTCFTPDSLAAALKARFGL---SAAED
```

Conserved motif

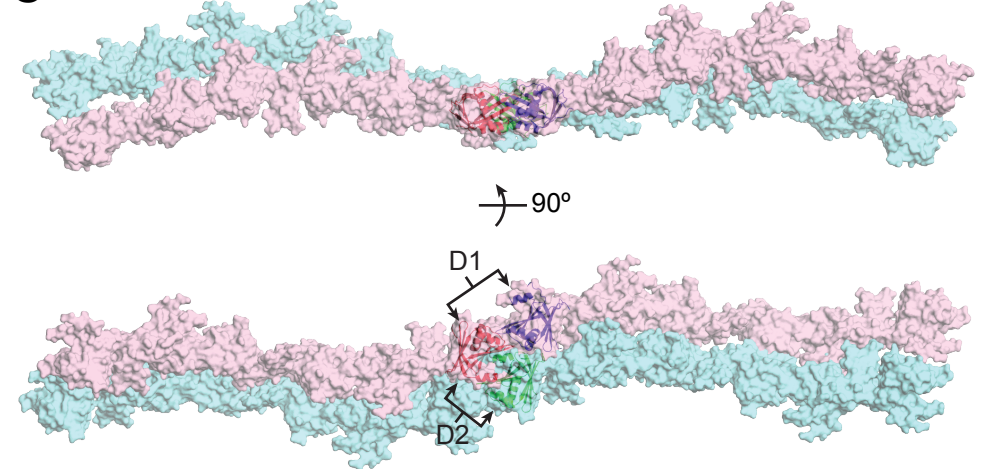
```
hCCDC61 67 FCHMLESALTQSS-----ESVFLDILTYTDLES LRNRKMGGPRGSLAPRSAQLNSKRYDILIYSVEFD-RIHY-PLPLPYQ
hSAS6 83 FPOKFIDLLOOCTQEHAKI PRFLLOLVSPAA-----ILDNSPAFLNVVETNPFFKHLTHI-SLKLPG
hXRCC4 66 YVGELRKALLSGAG---PADVYTFNFS-----KESCYFFFEKNLK-DVSFRLGSFNLEKV
hXLF 72 FLCHLDNLLRPLLKDAAH-PSEATFSCDC-----VADALITRVRSELS-GLPFYW-NFHCMLA
hPAXX 72 ITPRFRAACEQ-----QAVATLQ-----EDRASLTLS-GGP---SAL-AFDLSKV
```

B

CCDC61	100 / 0.00				
SAS6	12.85 / 4.56	100 / 0.00			
XRCC4	11.20 / 3.06	11.20 / 4.38	100 / 0.00		
XLF	9.52 / 3.37	7.93 / 5.34	15.51 / 4.26	100 / 0.00	
PAXX	13.39 / 4.00	16.96 / 5.93	11.60 / 4.24	8.03 / 3.92	100 / 0.00
CCDC61	SAS6	XRCC4	XLF	PAXX	

Sequence identities (%) / R.M.S.D (Å)

C



D

